# THE INCARNATION IN OUR STREET

GEORGE STEWART

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# THE INCARNATION IN OUR STREET

GEORGE STEWART

## By GEORGE STEWART

*God and Pain*

*The Incarnation in Our Street*

*The Crucifixion in Our Street*

*The Resurrection in Our Street*

*Redemption: An Anthology of the Cross*

*The Life of Henry B. Wright*

*History of Religious Education in Connecticut*

*Protestant Europe: Its Crisis and Outlook*
*In Collaboration with Adolf Keller*

# *The* INCARNATION IN OUR STREET

By

GEORGE STEWART

*Ecce, positus est iste casui et*
*Resurrectioni multorum in Israele*
*et ut sit signum cui contradicatur*

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To My Daughter
MARY STEWART
this book
is
Affectionately Dedicated

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# THE INCARNATION IN OUR STREET

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## *Three Attitudes Toward the Incarnation*

"Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass."—Luke 2:15.

In Lerolle's painting, *The Arrival of the Shepherds*, the herdsmen are drawn in a most realistic manner. They stand huddled against the rough tree trunks which support the roof of a cave-like stable. One shepherd has dropped upon his knee in adoration, the profound sense of his own unworthiness speaking from his whole body. A second, a splendid youth, raises himself on tiptoe, gazing in timid wonder over the shoulder of the man in front of him, his wistful inquiring eyes seeking an answer to life's riddle in the lighted face of Mary and in the sleeping Infant nestled at her breast. The most mature and thoughtful of the herdsmen lifts his hand in allegiance to

Him who should be the Lord of history and of thought.

Lerolle, in the stark, primitive veracity of his picture, devoid of halos, shows forth three attitudes which every thoughtful mind holds in contemplating Jesus Christ: adoration of Him who is altogether lovely, wonder at Him who is the incarnation of the wisdom of God on earth, acceptance of Him whose intelligence shall be the final arbiter of every human perplexity.

Consider Him as the *object of our supreme adoration.*

Position, ability, inherited power, bring a certain respect, but only the qualities of the heart command affection and adoration. The military establishment can demand obedience, the civil power can require enforcement of law, society makes many restrictions we are bound to recognize, but the gift of love comes only from heart unconstrained—no one receives it on demand. Many figures have emerged to claim the attention of men by various gifts of hand or mind. Some have built enormous edifices in the desert countries of Babylon and Assyria, some have carved intricate and awe-inspiring tombs or erected pyramids in Egypt to cause travelers to stop and wonder

after forty centuries. But men have never loved masters who erected monuments by forced labor beneath the lash. Still others have sought to hold the attention of mankind by the sheer strength and analytical power of their minds. Such men were Socrates and Plato and Aristotle. They received the homage and the respect of men, but they did not receive their adoration.

When Jesus was born of Mary in a stable at Bethlehem, a new master was born to rule not only the minds but the hearts of men. Compulsion was unknown to Him, forced labor was outside His program, He required no externally given homage. His followers should come by the decision of a free heart. He was the first great leader of men to discover that men adore that which commands not their labor but their love.

Jesus constrains our adoration by the simplicity of His life and teaching. Love thy neighbor as thyself, do unto others as you would that others do unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, take heed that ye do not your alms before men, judge not that ye be not judged, are commands that all can understand.

The absence of all pride of position or class,

His freedom from self-righteousness and spiritual dogmatism (so frequent a failing of good people), His immediate and sympathetic understanding, drew even the most tawdry, ill-conditioned, and unlovely personalities irresistibly to Him.

Again, it was Jesus' appreciation of men which caused them to acknowledge Him as the Prince Emmanuel. Exalted minds have been able to command a school of disciples by the sheer austerity of their teachings, teachings which often only the best trained and ablest minds could follow or appreciate. But Jesus began creating His kingdom, not only by the spiritual exaltation of His teachings but also through the creative power of affection. Untoward and stupid people, outcasts, those who were despised and hated, those who were confused and undone, publicans and sinners felt the warmth of His appreciation and responded to it. For Plato's *Republic* a generation of philosophers was necessary; for Jesus' kingdom only responsive hearts were needed. Jesus saw in every man yet another man, the man he *could* be, and this communication of His own dream of lives reborn, regenerated, made over, aroused the sleeping creative forces in men.

Men adore Jesus also for His liberating power.

Paul was thinking of Jesus when he wrote, "perfect love casteth out fear." Jesus was seldom a critic, He was almost always affectionate. Inhibitions and inferiority complexes passed away like mist before the sun in the presence of His strong belief in men. Psychology justifies His way of dealing with all sorts of people for He removed fear, instilled confidence, self-respect, and hope. Men gave Him their adoration then as now because He made them feel that they were valuable, at least to Him. Francis Thompson sensed this when he made the Hound of Heaven say to one fleeing from the love of God:

> Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
> Alack, thou knowest not
> How little worthy of any love thou art!
> Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
> Save Me, save only Me?

Like the youthful shepherd beholding the splendor of the Incarnation, we give our hearts in adoration. George Wither, an obscure sixteenth century poet, described this mood when he cried out:

> But O my God! though grovelling I appear
> Upon the ground, and have a rooting here

Which pulls me downward, yet in my desire
To that which is above me I aspire:
And all my best affections I profess
To Him that is the Sun of Righteousness.
Oh! keep the morning of His incarnation,
The burning noontide of His bitter passion,
The night of His descending, and the height
Of His ascension—ever in my sight!
That, imitating Him in what I may,
I never follow an inferior way.

Think of Jesus as the object of our supreme adoration.

Again, consider Him as *One to whom the world still turns its inquiring gaze.*

In the midst of hitherto unknown perplexities men like Lerolle's youthful shepherd stand on tiptoe and rest their questioning eyes upon Jesus for an answer to their most poignant questions.

The astounding new world opened up by the telescopes of astronomers, enlarging our universe until we can hardly appreciate the siderial distances and ages of our sister planets, the invisible world discovered by the lenses of microbe hunters, the atomic and molecular theories reducing matter to infinitesimal ionic points, each whirling in a perfectly described orbit at the almost unbelievable speed of thirteen thousand miles per second,

the new reinforcements to religion coming from physicists who further reduce all matter to spiritual origins, have all caused an immense expansion and enquiry in the minds of thoughtful men and women.

In addition to the questions involved in the apparently material makeup of our world, there are the perplexities involved in marriage, divorce, vast city populations, legislation and its observance, the use of unprecedented wealth, and the discipline of class and national feeling.

Although Jesus was not confronted with many of the identical problems which face us, He nevertheless was not silent to enquiring spirits.

In regard to the first set of perplexities involved in the immensely larger and more complex universe which confronts the modern mind, faith was to Him not a refuge for a baffled mind but an active guide to life—through faith He saw nature as intelligible, orderly, and continuous. Even in disorder and disease, even in hatred and the crucifixion, there was order and the persistence of all supreme values.

Jesus also faced the more human social problems, as if they could be solved. Bitterness could be overcome; misunderstanding, no matter of how

long standing, could be wiped out, fear and a sense of inadequacy could be cared for, eliminated by love from the heart.

Men like Lerolle's inquiring shepherd continue to turn their eyes to Jesus for a sure word in the midst of their perplexities.

In the stormy times of 1918 an obscure Slovak professor was creating on paper the new state of Czecho-Slovakia before the Armistice was signed. He had escaped from Austria and had agitated in Russia and America. A document which he circulated privately setting forth the case for the future state of Czecho-Slovakia closed with these significant words: "The political tasks of the democratic reconstruction of Europe must be attained and actually made possible by a moral rededication of the nations—either democracy or a dynastic militarism, either Bismarckism or rational and honest politics, either force or humanity, either matter or spirit. . . . Cæsar or Jesus—that is the watchword of democratic Europe." In the wistful period of the War's old age, statesmen turned inquiringly toward Christ.

Think of Him as One Who by virtue of His intellectual ascendency and spiritual insight has in His keeping the word of life for a desperate

world, One whom thoughtful men continue to approach for an answer to their deepest questions, the final arbiter in all human affairs.

Again, reflect upon Him as One Who claims the highest allegiance of every human heart.

Of course not all have given their allegiance to Him for His is a way of austere convictions and self-imposed disciplines, as well as of the more congenial qualities of friendship and sympathy. Lowell, in his *Present Crisis*, speaks of

> Truth forever on the scaffold,
> Wrong forever on the throne,
> Yet that scaffold sways the future.

For a time the devices and desires of ignoble men can triumph in any age, yet there is a provocative, pursuing, perhaps an innate sense of justice which comes to plague men when an issue is wrongly settled. Jesus stands over against human life asking men to give Him their allegiance. The anti-slavery martyrs, lynched and ostracized, tarred and feathered and ridden on rails out of their native cities,—eventually they are the final arbiters on the question of slavery. The tormenting power of an ideal placed upon the conscience of a generation finally upsets

sophistries and false treaties and inhuman economic organizations until the political and social and economic order corresponds more closely to the mind of Christ. The scaffolds of martyrs come back to haunt the minds and hearts of succeeding generations.

Jesus is here in life, He is what Christina Rossetti called "a curse and astonishment," and He demands that men vote upon Him. He remains with statesmen after they have left the council table; He goes out with thoughtless husbands who have treated their families unkindly; He remains with nagging wives to shame their self-satisfaction; He abides with careless young people, revealing to them the heartache and loss in wrongdoing; He is close to the pure in heart as a counsellor and guide and friend.

Think of Him as the final arbiter, the highest intellectual and moral expression of God in the garment of human flesh and blood.

Francis Quarles, that lighted mind of the sixteenth century, sang of Him:

> Even as the needle, that directs the hour,
> Touched with the loadstone, by the secret
> power
> Of hidden nature, points unto the Pole;

Even so the wavering powers of my soul,
Touched by the virtue of thy Spirit, flee
From what is earth, and point alone to Thee.

When I have faith to hold Thee by the hand,
I walk securely, and methinks I stand
More firm than Atlas; but when I forsake
The safe protection of Thine arm, I quake
Like wind-shaked reeds, and have no strength
at all,
But like a vine, the prop cut down, I fall.

Shall we go to Bethlehem or to any other city to see what is come to pass? Jesus Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God, the Day-spring from on high, has been born and is here among men.

Reflect on Him as Lerolle's shepherds beheld Him, as the supreme object of man's adoration, as the One to whom the world still turns an inquiring gaze, the final arbiter of every human problem, as One to whom men will finally give their highest allegiance.

## *The Lord of Life*

**"This child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel."—Luke 2:34.**

These words were spoken by an aged man who had long expected the Prince who was to deliver his people. As the parents of Jesus brought Him to the temple to present Him to the Lord, the old seer recognized One who was to redeem the lost sons of the House of Israel. Christmas Day had already come and gone, but its first radiance was still upon the young mother and her Child. New values had come to human life, new potentialities, new standards of conduct. In Jesus was enhancement of intellect, enrichment of spirit, and the fulfilment of prophecy. Life could not only be more glorious, it could be more effective than it had ever been before. The aged Simeon, accustomed to search the faces of the youth of his day for the radiance that should reveal the Son of God, was at last rewarded. Here was the light which would light every man. The

promise of God to send His Son was no longer in the realm of possibility—it was accomplished, a terrible and beautiful fact. He was here in the world; what were men to do with Him? The old man exclaimed: "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace . . . for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Then quickly changing from his high exaltation to a reflective mood, he said: "This child is set for the fall and the rising again of many in Israel." Once light has come, once possibilities are revealed, when we once see what can happen and what human life can be, we can never be as we were before.

A sensitive and æsthetic soul accustomed to crude artistic productions, groping blindly after form and beauty, can never be content once having seen a great master's painting or having heard a great musician play.

A boy struggling to make a living by the crude handlooms of the southern mountains can never rest content with such impotent devices once he has seen the powerful machine loom doing the work of fifty human hands. The simple ancestral device, turning out its small quota of cloth, no longer satisfies him.

An ingenious and exploratory humanity, when it receives added light, can no longer remain content as it was, nor can sensitive hearts looking upward for light be longer satisfied with less once they have experienced the incarnation of purity and love and courage in Jesus Christ. Weak and frail personalities are no longer reconciled to impotence once they are aware that power is available in Him.

Whenever we experience that which satisfies our curiosities and our longings, that which brings an answer to our desire for beauty, that which replaces weakness with power, there comes into life a glowing and disturbing value which is set for the falling or the rising of men according to their faith.

The wisdom of Simeon is justified day by day to believing hearts. When Jesus comes into life, He is always set for the rising and the falling of many. The enquiring, the courageous, those who are attracted by His charm and beauty, those who desire power to conquer weakness, respond and find help in Him; those who have no hunger and thirst for righteousness reject Him and suffer the inevitable consequences. In a peculiar way one is judged by his estimate of Jesus. Wherever

goodness comes, it is either a rock of offense or the salvation of those who see and feel it.

How is it that this Child is set for the falling and the rising of many in the fellowship of believers? How is it that He possesses our attention and commands a hearing?

He reaches us *through our feelings.*

Before Jesus came there had been a high, austere faith in those who crossed the Red Sea and journeyed *via* Sinai to the land of Canaan. They were a people with an ethical code and a strict discipline; but there was little feeling in their faith. The Lord of Hosts, high and lifted up, did not dwell in the homes of men in the sense that He did in the person of Jesus. It took Jesus to add affection to faith. Evelyn Underhill gives an account of a conversation she once had with an agnostic who had been receiving instruction from a devout and simple-minded nun. The nun and her pupil had been discussing the Annunciation, which had presented some difficulties. "Well, anyway," said the pupil, "one is not obliged to believe that the Blessed Virgin was visited by a solid angel, dressed in a white robe," to which the nun replied, "No, perhaps not, but still—he would have to wear something!"

Right here one finds a great truth: the elusive and subtle realities of the spiritual world must be somehow clothed and made concrete, actual, tangible. The desire of Thomas to thrust his hand into the side of Christ is still the desire of many men and women, to touch an actual present Jesus. If most of us are ever to grasp spiritual realities, ever so little, they must be clothed in human flesh and blood,—great shining, luminous words of God, love, compassion, faithfulness, made flesh. Behind all the symbols of the Church of Christ, the bread and wine and water of baptism, stands the supreme symbol of all,—the tiny Infant at Bethlehem, resistless in His charm, unanswerable in His logic as He grows to the noonday of His power, given as a token from God for the rising and the falling of many in Israel.

We find difficulty in giving our affection to a general proposition, to abstract truths; we find ourselves at home with particulars, we can easily love a person. Because of this, Jesus came to represent God; and whenever Jesus is left in the background men find special saints who can represent for them the Word made flesh again. Other great faiths have been compelled to find some mediation of God, some particular object upon

which the faithful can fix their eyes. Therefore we have in Buddhism the cult of the Great Mother, and within pure Brahminism the cult of Krishna worship. Man wants a personality to which he can attach his affection, and there came in Jesus One Who appealed to the love, the affection, the compassion of men in His helpless infancy, to their enthusiasm in His buoyant youth, to their moral courage in His ministry of redemptive self-dedication.

The Negro poet, Countee Cullen, in his "Litany of the Dark People," reveals how Jesus claims men through their feelings, touched as He was, from the cradle to the grave, with the sense of our infirmities.

Our flesh that was a battle-ground
Shows now the morning break;
The ancient deities are downed
For thy eternal sake
Now that the past is left behind,
Fling wide thy garment's hem,
That we stay one with Thee in mind,
O Christ of Bethlehem!

The thorny wreath may ridge our brow,
The spear may mar our side,
And on white wood from a scented bough

We may be crucified;
Yet no assault the old gods make
Upon our agony
Shall swerve our footsteps from the wake
Of Thine, toward Calvary.

And if we hunger now and thirst,
Grant our witholders may,
When heaven's constellations burst
Upon Thy crowning day.
Be fed by us—, and given to see
Thy mercy in our eyes,
When Bethlehem and Calvary
Are merged in Paradise.

He Who had twelve legions of angels to do His command, chose not by might nor by external power but by the irresistible winsomeness of compassion, to draw the hearts of men unto Himself.

This, Simeon said, was the Child set for the rising and the falling of many in Israel, as they accept or reject Him in their feelings.

He also wins us *through our loyalties.*

One of the peculiar elements about Jesus from His infancy to the Cross was His provocativeness. He brought into life and thought a ferment which was at once preservative and disturbing. Explosive, destructive power, the potency of new ideas,

was wrapt up in Him, as well as the secret of reconciliation and redemption. Intense loyalties were inevitable in His way of life. People are still willing to be crucified, or eaten by lions, or starved in dungeons for His name's sake, willing to fight for a name or a doctrine. If ever Christianity becomes so weak or so broad that men will not stand up to risk life for it, or what is more, bear social reproach or a broken heart for it, Christianity will have become altogether sterile. All great emotions are intense, all deep convictions dangerous, all dedications replete with hazard. If Christ only stirred men to feel who never gave their allegiance, He could not claim us so insistently. The Dean of Yale once remarked of a distinguished professor: "It doesn't seem to have made any difference to him whether Christ was born or not." No loyalty had ever been given, though in the dim past feelings may have been profoundly stirred.

This Child, who was set for the testing of one's loyalties, for the rising or the falling of many in Israel, says today, as He said in those months which led to the cross, "Believe in Me, follow Me." One can keep an open mind on many

themes for a lifetime, but on a few issues one must decide.

Christ comes to men with a provocative and arresting quality, and face to face with Him, men must decide. He does appeal to our affections, and He also commands our loyalties.

Not only does the Infant in the manger test the feelings and the loyalties of men, but supremely He comes to test our wills. When Phillips Brooks wrote

> The hopes and fears of all the years
> Are met in Thee tonight

He was sensing the fact that the chief end of man is to glorify God with appropriate service, and not merely to feel and not merely to give one's loyalty. The test of any military unit is not alone its enthusiasm but whether or not it will behave courageously under a baptism of fire. Men rise or fall according to the object which claims their wills. There is from first to last in Jesus' life and teachings a penetrating, arresting quality which says: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." He says to men who respond to Him: restore what has been taken—

the money, the good name, the joy within the house; stretch forth hands of affection and of love, long withered through inactivity, and find them made whole; expand hearts, leprous with bitter memories, and find them become the dwelling place of God; rise up in sacrificial service and find limbs long crippled respond to the dedicated will. Change life's bitter waters into wine by the sweetness which comes only by the completed gift of one's self.

John Oxenham has sensed the possibility of human hearts responding to Him:

Wherever—bond of ancient thrall—
A strong soul bursts its shackling chain,
And upward strains to meet the Call,—
There, Christ is born again.

Wherever vision of the Light
Disturbs the sleeping souls of men,
Night trails away its shadowy flight,—
And Christ is born again.

Whenever soul in travail turns,
And climbs the barriers that constrain,
With steady cheer Hope's sweet lamp burns,—
And Christ is born again.

Whenever men respond to Jesus as He advances through His life from the manger to the cross, in their feelings, in their loyalties, and in their wills, there Christ is born again and there men arise in newness of life.

## *Jesus as a Savior*

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour."—Luke 2:11.

In the siege of Lucknow in the great Indian mutiny the garrison was on the point of starvation. Supplies of bread and drink were almost exhausted, and British forces awaited death by hunger, fire and sword. After weeks of severe privation there came to the sensitive ear of a Highlander the sound of the bagpipes of the relief expedition. The sound grew louder and louder, until finally the whole desperate command could hear the skirling of the pipes. The beleaguered troops were delirious with joy: some one was bringing help. The oncoming battalions smashed the ranks of the mutineers and greeted the starving soldiers within the city and the garrison at Lucknow was saved.

When General Chinese Gordon was overtaken by disaster at Khartoum on January 26, 1885, and his Egyptian expeditionary forces massacred,

the whole of the vast Sudan was inundated with barbarism and the population reduced to slavery. The only troops which escaped were a column led by Emin Pasha who fled to the south, seeking refuge among savage tribes in the country north of Lake Albert Nyanza. Fearing lest he would be unable to offer any prolonged resistance, Emin began writing letters to the Egyptian government, to Mr. Mackay the missionary, to the anti-slavery society, and to Sir John Kirk, begging assistance before they starved or were completely annihilated. The world fixed its attention on this tiny isolated army in the trackless spaces in the heart of Africa. An American, Henry M. Stanley, was chosen to lead the rescue party. Thousands of applications flowed in for places in this desperate enterprise. Every young man in England seemed ready to join the relief expedition. Stanley reached the immense equatorial forest and cut his way foot by foot in the cheerless semi-twilight beneath the overspreading mass of trees and vines. At six in the morning the carriers began their journey, hewing away the tangle of vines and creepers, floundering in oozy creeks, drenched by rain and heavy dews, tormented by insects, plagued with devouring tropical ulcers, and crip-

pled by cruel skewers strewn on the trail by hostile tribesmen. Came the end of the first month and the sick list began to grow. Men were dying of starvation, their spirits were depressed by the sepulchral gloom of the solemn and foodless forest. After one hundred and forty-nine days, with one hundred and eighty men dead on the trail, the column emerged into the sunlight. Twenty days later they joined the lost Egyptian forces. Emin Pasha had been saved, but at a terrific cost. For no other reason than love, men had grown gray-haired in a month from suffering. Saving men costs untold physical anguish, persistent endeavor, and ofttimes a broken heart.

The people of Jesus' day needed saving: like the caged troops in Lucknow, they were surrounded with danger to body and mind. They looked expectantly for the dayspring from on high to illumine their darkened lives. Like the expedition of Emin Pasha, they were encircled by many and great dangers. They were treated with contempt, they were oppressed. Whoever should save them would need to have qualities of compassion and endurance beyond human powers. Upon what wistful ears came the knowledge of the birth of Jesus!—"For unto you is born

this day . . . a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

What manner of salvation does Jesus bring.

*He saves us from self-love.* He keeps back his followers from presumptuous sins. Stanley, after his life of hardship in Africa, wrote: "Civil law is not sufficient for mankind. It is for the protection of men from abuse, and for the punishment of offenders, but religion teaches just intercourse, unselfishness, self-denial, virtue, just dealing, love of our fellow creatures, compassion, kindness, forbearance, patience, fortitude, lofty indifference to death, by spiritual exhaltation. While atheists and heathens would regard only their own self-advantage, opposing craft to an opponent's detriment, a religious man would be persuaded that he could not do so without a sense of wrong-doing, and would strive to act so as to ensure his own good opinion and that of other conscientious, just-minded fellow-men. Religion is my invisible shield against moral evil, against the corruption of the mind, against the defilement of the soul."

In demanding whole-souled loyalty to Himself, Jesus rallies the higher nature, to overcome the barbarous and uncivilized self that stalks within.

Jesus also saves us from ourselves by the very hardness of his way. He uttered no more difficult saying than "Straight is the gate and narrow the way that leadeth unto life." Those who follow Him are often saved from fatal encumbrances by the necessity which He lays upon them to strip away all extra tackling, all affiliations which are spiritually detrimental. An old Civil War naval surgeon recounts how Union privateers were wont to chase Confederate blockade-runners steaming out of Charleston and Savannah bound for Liverpool. Sometimes the chase would last from daybreak until nightfall, the pursuing craft constantly passing huge bales of pressed cotton which the blockade-runner had thrown overboard as the price of safety. How many of us, face to face with the issues of life or death spiritually, jettison a whole deckload of habits, associations, practices, unwarranted grudges, in order to strip and to run the straight and narrow race for those who see and appreciate and appropriate Jesus' way of life.

He keeps back His servants from presumptuous sins and saves us from ourselves by the very severity of His road.

Jesus also saves us from fear unto assurance.

Consider some of the over-spreading fears which rest upon our day. Biologists fear the race is being so mixed that it is deteriorating, medical men and social workers are depressed with the ravages of industrial and communicable disease, statesmen distrust the man in the street who cannot know the intricacies of government, and the average man has lost faith in the politician. Business men and manufacturers, themselves victims of the Frankenstein they have created, dread dehumanization through machine production. Fear has caused men to fight machine looms and mechanical improvements, for improvements have meant loss of work. In the early days of the industrial revolution in America a serious labor war broke out in central New York because an old employee was replaced by a machine that could do her work more cheaply and effectively. The General Electric Company has recently installed a great steam shovel that can do the day's work of one man in three minutes. Men dread the creations of their own hands and minds when it may mean an empty dinner pail and hungry mouths at home.

Diplomats, distrusting their own powers to make and keep peace, become the advance scouts

of immense armies and navies. The historian fears that we are growing old, that our civilization is becoming senile and will go down in dust and ashes with Nineveh, Tyre, and Rome.

The Christian believer is oppressed with the current moral apostacy to standards, tenets long held but now being swamped in the rising tide of relativism in science, art, philosophy and ethics.

The ghose of old age, unemployment, and poverty stalks beside millions of faithful men and women. Fear is the great cause of unrest in home and factory and office. It would be foolish to say that blind faith alone, unallied to intelligence and hard work, can lay these ghosts. It will not, of course. Many pious and godly missionaries have been massacred in the act of prayer; baptism and repentance will not stop the flight of the poisoned arrow or the dumdum bullet.

But it would be atheism to say that God is not adequate for these as for other crises. Faith allied to willing hands and feet, to clear and alert minds, to dedicated and loving hearts, can do all things. Is it an emigration or a labor or a social or a personal problem? Jesus has a sure word to say: "Love thy neighbor as thyself;

on this hangeth all the law and the prophets." And from the events of the last ten years we could say—yes, and on this hangeth all civilization as well. He shall save His people from their fears to assurance when they seriously attempt to do unto others as they would have others do unto them. Jesus has still the most arresting and effective formula to apply to a complex and almost unmanageable world.

He saves us from our fears by His own experience that all great and noble action shall never be lost. Who is ground to earth in a struggle for a better world, and He was not crowned with thorns? Whose nerves are shattered in teaching in school or home, and He was not pressed beyond measure by questioning multitudes dull of hearing? Who is discouraged in the public service? Did He not cleanse two lepers and only one returned to give thanks? Who is weary with unappreciation and rejection, and He was not lifted upon the wood beneath the blackness of the unanswering sky? He who has tasted the depths of human woe comes to beleaguered men and women to say, "In this world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

He is a Savior from fear to assurance; in Him perfect love shall cast out fear.

Again, *Jesus saves us to newness of life.* Sometimes, even when we have ourselves fairly well in hand and when we are not plagued with doubts and fears, we still find ourselves powerless to struggle or respond. Over in Macedonia one sees on the long road from Belgrade to Salonika sidetracks filled with dozens of silent, rusting locomotives,—former carriers of burdens, swift and effective servants no longer panting and restless to obey, no longer potent under a pressure of steam. The fire-boxes are cold and there is no hand at the throttle. The engines are intact but powerless; they need the hot, powerful breath of steam and some one at the throttle. These silent locomotives are parables of impotent lives, motionless and without value, needing the hot enthusiasms of high dedications to use them as instruments in God's hands.

At Christmas time we again breathe the breath of life. Once more we respond to an unseen touch of a stainless hand upon our hearts. Shakespeare, in his gentle lines, tells us that no dangers threaten during this holy season when men have turned their faces toward God:

Then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, no witch hath power to charm,
So hallowed and so gracious is the time.

Christmas is peculiarly a time for renewing life by belief in One who can save and keep. After reading a few hundred lines of Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of the World*, a friend remarked: "I perceived that he had not hit the right chord. It is the *Light of Asia* in a feeble, vapid style. . . . What a poem he could have written, had he but believed in the Saviour of the world!" What lives are lived by men and women and children when they are allied to the Saviour of the world! How Jesus not only saves, but heightens and enhances life!

Jesus saves by the reinforcement which comes with His own personality. He puts His giant hand on our feeble pulse and gives us heart, and we feel that He loves us, cares for us, suffers for us. He makes us feel that we are "Friends, fellow mortals, bearer of the ghost that burns, and breaks its lamp, but is not lost."

Any one who will open his heart He can save from self, any one who will respond He loves, any one who will claim Him as Lord He will bring from fear to assurance, any one whose life

has grown stale and meaningless He will remake until life is again vivid with meaning. All that is wrapped up in the meaning of Christmas Day. "For unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."

The earth is crying out today for generous and loving hearts, for ample and understanding minds which in some incomplete human way incarnate once again at least some portion of the spiritual wisdom and power which were in Christ. Elvira Slack has touched on this in her lines on the divine life wrapped up in human form:

But most of all I wait upon
An old accustomed mood of His,
Fashioned of His humility,
When reaching down He clothes Himself about
With the torn garment of the human heart,
A habit gray and thin,
A meagre thing!—
And yet how blest its breaks and seams!
For should He find it hanging empty,
Upon the nail, within the hall,
Fitted somewhat by use,
As friend and neighbor might
In their familiar way

With nothing said,—
He may forego the light of stars,
And suit it to His need instead.

Shall we in the coming days be found clothing ourselves with the garment of light which he affords to all who will avail themselves of it? There has been born unto you and yours a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

## *If Christmas Comes*

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."—Luke 2: 14.

Certain outward conditions inevitably appear with the revolving seasons: wind and rain of Spring, heat of Summer, the bracing Fall, the frozen months of Winter. There are seasons of special celebration, the inward genius of which does not come by the mere flight of time but is seen and appreciated only by those of sensitive heart and spiritual imagination.

The Fourth of July was bitter mockery to black men of this country before 1863, but when freedom came their hearts were made receptive and today there is no more fertile soil for the idea of human liberty than in those men whose freedom had been denied for many generations. Only when chains were broken by the travail of four bitter years of civil warfare, could Negroes understand and appreciate the meaning of the rights of man. There were former slaves who said the

work of emancipation was not complete, that still there were disabilities, and a deal of very hard work to go through. But Negroes with appreciation and imagination knew that the greatest obstacle to human progress was utterly done away.

When Christmas came in apostolic times, when families of believers around the Eastern Mediterranean or up toward the edge of Gaul assembled to celebrate the Holy Day, there were many who saw no meaning in it. The mid-winter season passed, but Christmas never came to these scoffers. Christmas was confronted then, as it is faced now, with a world of men and women steeped in arrogance and pride. It had to win its way against sinful and stubborn hearts, bound with the prejudice of classes and the animosity of racial groups, but it came into the world. The feast was kept in dens and caves of the earth, in lonely quarries, in the catacombs beneath Rome, in the wilds of the Campagna, and in the rocky defiles of the Balkans. To those with eyes to see, it meant emancipation and power and the healing of broken hearts.

*When Christmas comes to any one, it is a transforming experience.* One of the surpassing aspects

of the Incarnation was the imagination which God used in revealing His nature to men through Jesus Christ. If an Omniponent Deity had thundered out an edict that every knee should bow to Him, there would be no irresistible appeal; but there is a winsomeness about a helpless infant, be it the baby in *The Luck of Roaring Camp* or the Child of Bethlehem. Surely God could have chosen no better way to reveal Himself than through the gradual expansion of a human life cast among the rank and file of the children of earth. The Son of God, who was to call men to Him by the sheer greatness of His life, was as helpless as any infant. Those who were to build the Kingdom of God were to choose His cause by the verdict of a free heart, persuaded by His teaching and charmed by His life, with no other compulsion.

Christmas has come and gone these many years; yet any one looking out upon the world can see much that is unredeemed and many irreconcilables who wait in protest for a better day. But does not the most persuasive appeal for religion and God exist in a life beautifully and unselfishly lived? Is this not the last and best means of inducing free men to choose a higher life? In

Jesus we see goodness made interesting and dramatic and attractive. We have in the quality of His life a spiritual ideal which beckons men by word and action to lay hold, by an act of the will, upon a power outside themselves which can aid them in their struggle toward perfect freedom and in their quest for completion of personality. But there are some who may say: "I have bowed in adoration yearly at this season, I have longed for the spirit of Christmas to well up in my heart and life. But in some way I have not made connection." No serious man would suggest that this linking-up process is a simple task, but it is nevertheless possible. Through silent and audible prayer, through great music, through books and the experience of others, through the voice of nature and through authentic periods of personal communion with Him men find themselves in contact. Jesus' word is authoritative and direct on this point and laden with profound meaning: "Ye must be born again."

The prophets and priests who have stirred the hearts of men in multitudes have found that in Jesus' word lies the secret of spiritual power. We must start all over as little children. When an artist begins to copy a picture or to draw a por-

trait, he cannot grit his teeth and say, "I will do this thing"; that would utterly unfit him for his task. Rather, he sits in front of the object, adores its beauty, the sequence of line upon line, the magic of color and form, until his mind is dispossessed of other concerns, until, artistically, he is born again and ventures forth upon his task with humility. In like manner the seeker for God cannot take Him by storm. God does not yield His peace and His power at any man's command. The strident, imperative, dogmatic ways of men keep them from God. The mysteries of faith are revealed to those dispossessed of desire to keep something exclusively for self, to those emancipated from prejudice and envy and hate, to those who have put away niggardly conceptions of bargaining love. It is when men are born again, bringing a fresh, new mind and heart, that they are ushered into the Kingdom.

Those who wish Christmas to tie up their lives to Jesus Christ need only unload their minds and hearts and say: "Take me as I am, as a little child." But unless their burden of prejudice or misunderstanding or malice is unloaded, it will be like the load on the camel's back, preventing them from going through the gates of spiritual

comprehension and keeping them without the City of God.

Philip Doddridge, the eighteenth century poet and hymn writer, sensed the liberating power of Jesus in a receptive heart when he wrote:

He comes the prisoners to release
In Satan's bondage held;
The gates of Brass before Him burst,
The iron fetters yield.

He comes, the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace
T'enrich the humble poor.

When Jesus comes into any life, it is a transforming experience.

*If Christmas comes to a family, it always means enhancement of life.*

Those in whom Christ is born anew are redeemed from emotional unsteadiness in their homes. Petty egotism and ungenerous thought are present in many homes. Impatience takes the place of loving kindness, and tyranny gradually usurps the realm of love. Kindliness on Monday gives way to fretfulness on Tuesday, and our

occasional or habitual temperamental outbursts take away the charm and the beauty of the home. Every one at his best longs for steadiness of emotional and spiritual life. Our souls cry out to be released from this erratic and transitory faith which we throw over when under the pressure of circumstances, we revert to pagan self-interest.

And not only would we be redeemed from intermittent Christian living; we would also be wholly evangelized. Some who are saintly in many respects are barbarians in the treatment of family or employees. In some points our codes are high, in others very low. Half-truths which have gained good repute by reason of their antiquity are mean and cowardly when examined, even if tenaciously held by good people. One of these is the phrase, "Charity begins at home." That is only half of the truth; the other half might be, "but it does not end there." It only begins. The life which appropriates for itself the purpose and the mind of Christ will be sensitive to the pains and privations of people, no matter how far away. Like Jesus they can say: "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, my sister and my mother." If Christmas comes to any life, it will mean immensely wider and more

constant sympathies and interests; it will mean redemption from fugitive and patchy Christian living.

If Christmas comes, the meaning of reconciliation will be made plain. Large areas of Christian people have held the view that Christ came into the world and was sacrificed as a price for the guilt of the world in a bargain-and-sale manner; that Jesus died to appease and reconcile an angry deity. In the New Testament we have always the reverse of this idea: there we are taught that Jesus was seeking to reconcile wayward men to God, not God to men. Paul says: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." Jesus Himself said: "Blessed are the peacemakers," the reconcilers. Later in the same discourse He remarked: "If thou takest thy gift before the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee [not that you have aught against your brother], leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer

thy gift." If Christmas comes, many causes of persistent vexation will vanish, many old irritations and complaints will be removed, many a heart will be made tender by a new appreciation and understanding.

If a rebirth of Christ's spirit should come to a family it would find its work intensified, weak souls reënforced, unlovely attitudes thrown aside. A family needs renewal of grace, that it may be adventurous, pioneering in thought and aspiration, not only being guardians of the tried and trusted principles of conduct but also purifying and stimulating those who are experimenting along untried roads.

*If Christmas comes to a church it will also mean a transformation of life.*

Wits and wags have always criticized the church as a favorite indoor sport, but imagination can see in the church—faulty as it is, undreamed of sources of good for mankind. And these things shall be for any church which will open wide its door and let flood in the genius of redemption and reconciliation which was wrapped up in the life of the Infant of Bethlehem.

A fresh visitation of Jesus' spirit would also cause the church to revalue itself and to estimate

its shortcomings. One day Thackeray and Carlyle were dining with some friends, when the subject of conversation turned upon Titian. Carlyle gruffly said: "And here sit I, a man made in the image of God, who knows nothing about Titian and cares nothing about Titian, and that's another fact about Titian." Thackeray replied: "Pardon me, but that is not a fact about Titian. That is a fact—a lamentable fact—about Thomas Carlyle." Carlyle had judged himself by his attitude toward a great artist.

There is something about Christmas that judges us. We cast the shadow of our imperfect lives against the perfect example and we see the parts that are weak or wholly lacking. There are many who see nothing to rejoice about, nothing to encourage, nothing to point the way to a redeemed and a peaceful world. But the helpful facts are there. The remarks of people like Carlyle are a commentary on their own dullness of insight, that they do not perceive the significance of the incarnation on that first Christmas Day.

If Christmas comes to any person, to any family, or to any church, it always means a transformation of life; it means peace on earth and good will toward men.

## *The Adventure of the Incarnation*

**"Herod will seek the young child to destroy him."—Matthew 2:13.**

When men celebrate the Incarnation their hearts go back to childhood days, to early mornings after mysterious nights, to the patter of bare feet across a cold floor, the sight of bulging Christmas stockings—the sheer receptive joy of childhood and the response of a loving family.

Then come older days, when they pack stockings for little ones, and seek to communicate to them the thrill and happiness which others have given them.

Each Christmas has had its own associations—its faces, its joys, its sorrows, its high resolves, its moments when the Child of Bethlehem seemed close beside us and we were wrapt in adoration and devout purpose.

Seldom do men pause to consider that Christmas has always been a tremendous experience for every one.

Christmas has been a *great adventure for God*. How important was the home life of the Son of God! The angel of the Lord had announced Jesus coming to Mary, seeking to prepare her for the ministry of guiding His childhood days. With her whole heart she responded to the divine visitation, and the light which was upon her face at the Annunciation has been the theme of much of the world's best art. Raphael's masterpiece at Dresden, Da Vinci, Lucca Della Robbia, Andrea del Sarto, all have sought to portray the response of the mother to the wish of God, and they have blessed us in their efforts.

John Donne, appreciating the creative gentleness and winsomeness of Mary and her Son, wrote his "Sonnet on the Nativity."

Immensity, cloister'd in thy dear womb,
Now leaves his well-beloved imprisonment;
There He hath made Himself to his intent,
Weak enough now into our world to come:
But oh! for thee, for Him, hath th' inn no room?
Yet lay Him in His stall, and from th' orient
Stars and wise men will travel, to prevent
Th' effect of Herod's jealous general doom
See'st thou, my soul! with thy faith's eye, how He,

Which fills all place, yet none holds Him,
doth lie!
Was not His pity toward thee wondrous
high,
That would have need to be pitied by thee?
Kiss Him, and with Him into Egypt go,
With His kind mother who partakes thy woe.

God must have rejoiced in Mary—in her sympathetic understanding, in her wholehearted dedication, in her willing sacrifice during that last devastating week, when church and state conspired to slay Her Son upon the bitter rood.

God entered upon a great adventure in trusting His Son to the keeping of a gentle Palestinian maiden and in leaving Jesus in the midst of a dangerous and savage generation.

God might have seen His Son taken by disease or accident, by fire or flood, for in His humanity Jesus was alive to all the afflictions our flesh is heir to. He was tried and tempted as we are; He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities; He was reared in the midst of a distressed and poverty-stricken subject nation; He was treated with the same contempt, and heaped with the same oppression. God could have let down into human life a person whom the burning sun

would not distress and the frost of winter would not cause to suffer, to whom temptation and human misery were nothing—but the Child born in the manger was a sensitive soul, who suffered and rejoiced as other mortals, who felt the heartache of the world, who even in the Garden of Gethsemane prayed God to let a particularly bitter cup pass from Him, but who in the moment of His supreme temptation raised up His life like an offering before an altar and said, as He sweat great drops of blood, "Not my will but thine be done." This Child, with a free course before Him, could have taken the lower road, could perhaps have disappointed God while men applauded, but He did not. God's adventure was vindicated in Jesus' life.

And God took a third tremendous risk when Jesus was here in the flesh, a risk in human nature. The human race may be a very little lower than the angels—but that little is a great deal. There are savage and wolfish streaks in men and it takes creative love to trust them. Have you ever pondered on that verse, "God so loved the world"? He so cared, so wished and hoped and believed, for the sorry, muddled human tangle, that the gift of His son created a response—not a great re-

sponse, but enough to vindicate God in hazarding His Son among men to grow and to teach and to die.

Perhaps the greatest risk of all was to let Jesus die among men and still claim to be the Lord of Life. Ignominious death and shining victory are not easily harmonized in the minds of most men. They easily ask: "If Jesus was victorious, why was He crucified?" When the Anzacs sailed away from Gallipoli leaving seventy-one thousand brave lads sleeping in the shell-swept cemeteries about the north bank of the Dardanelles, the prestige of British arms suffered immeasurably throughout the Arabic-speaking world. To all outward appearances they were utterly wasted. And God ran such a risk in allowing His Son to live and die in a world of unthinking men. Perhaps after all, there would not be even a handful who would see love and compassion and redemption made incarnate for them on Golgotha! But God so loved that He took the hazard; and first the little group of women, and then larger groups of disciples, and then Paul, and afterward great communities of men throughout the centuries have vindicated God for His creative belief in men.

That first Christmas season was a great experience for God, as He made His great adventure in the life of Mary, in Jesus, and in men.

Again, Christmas was *a great experience for Jesus*. In a sense, it meant enlisting for foreign service. It meant leaving off the power and glory of divinity and being clothed not only with human flesh but with human limitations of time and space and personality. All the perplexing, hampering, confining circumstances of ordinary mortal life were placed upon Him. He was to grow up and to commend Himself as any other human: He was compelled to win His friends, settle His disputes, earn His living, as we do. "Is not this the carpenter's son?" was asked by His astonished fellow-townsmen. He must commend not only the historic personality Jesus, but He must also do a more difficult thing: He must take two great figures which had emerged from the thought life of the prophets and harmonize them into one radiant personality, namely, the Suffering Servant of the 53d Chapter of Isaiah and the Messiah of Hebrew aspiration. He was to combine the Wonderful, the Mighty Counsellor, the Prince of Peace, that brilliant and expected figure of Hebrew history and apocalypse, with a spirit

which suffered long and was kind, that was bruised for our iniquities and by whose stripes we are healed. Could men see the prince they had dreamed about for centuries come in the person of One who was despised and rejected? Could they remain faithful to One who laid aside the royal purple for the artisan's gown and who said that if one would be greatest of all he must be the servant of all? Would there be enough perception and insight to reach the deep currents of His spirit, "the depth of the riches of love in Christ Jesus?" How often, after dramatizing the divine compassion in feeding a multitude of hungry people, or healing the halt and deaf and blind, He was wont to pause and say to His unresponsive disciples: "Do ye not yet believe, can ye not yet understand?" Paul spoke of God's revealing His Son "in the fullness of time." What a difficult matter it is for men to discern when hearts are receptive to the life of Christ springing up into eternal life and light!

Christmas was a tremendous adventure for Jesus. Yet He went, step by step, unafraid, from the cradle to the grave, creating by love that quality within human hearts which could fit them for companionship and service with Him.

Again, Christmas is a *great experience for men.* In it we find that which our hearts need at any time of life. As a child, your heart overflowed with sympathy and affection for the Infant in the cradle in Bethlehem. The disillusionment and the shocks of maturity may have lost for you something of the charm and persuasiveness of Jesus, but Christmas is the anniversary of one's best hopes springing up yearly in newness of life. In Him Who was a hard-pressed Child of earth as well as the Son of Heaven, we find One Who understands perfectly all we would be and all the reasons for our failure,—Some One Who never rejects us, Whose compassion never fails—infinitely responsive, unfailingly kind.

Jesus came in answer to Men's hopes and desires, the fulfilment of all they had dreamed and wanted to be and were not. Jesus was God's response to voices upraised in prayer for an ampler life, to human faces ground into the dust but lifting themselves heavenward in piteous petition. God's answer to men's queries, and God's promise of what men can count upon, are in Him.

As Christmas Day comes year after year, there is a special meaning in it for all life's situations: compassion for broken hearts, joy for hearts over-

flowing with gratitude, fortitude for those whose strife is not yet done, strength for the weak and undone, courage to the faltering and the weary, beauty to those burdened with the monotony of a dreary round of toil.

Christmas was a great experience for God: to risk the divine dignity and love in human form, to trust a young mother to be the guardian of so precious a life, to permit His Son to walk the dangerous path of earth. For Christ it meant an adventure in the presence of the enemy, from the days when His parents fled into Egypt to escape an irate governor to the night when He was crowned with thorns and condemned to crucifixion as a common criminal. It means hazard and adventure for us, whether we be six, or sixteen, or sixty. For whenever men are granted revelations of light or truth or beauty, they shall be judged by that light.

The question which always comes to the individual heart in the presence of the Incarnation of the Son of God is, Will you open up your life to new light, new power, to the ever new spiritual resources which are in Him?

## *Four Figures of Jesus*

As the great holy days of the Christian year approach, the thoughtful pause to consider their meaning. Old traditions are scrutinized, ancient loyalties examined, and we ask ourselves at Christmas time, Who was Jesus and what does He mean to the world?

The coming of Jesus at any time means a different thing to every man, according to the set of his life. Christ came to torture as well as to bless. On one occasion He remarked to a friend, "I come not to bring peace but a sword," the relentless pursuing love which Thompson dramatized in his *Hound of Heaven* and Charles Rann Kennedy in his *The Terrible Meek*—love which engages, attracts, arrests, and puts to shame all unworthiness. By the searching purity and honesty of His nature, Christ has aroused men and not infrequently invited their attacks. The aged Simeon said to Mary and Joseph: "This child is destined for the downfall as well as for the rise

of many in Israel: destined to be a Sign for man's attack—to bring out the secret aims of many a heart. And your own soul will be pierced by a spear." He has ever been a searcher of hearts, a sign for man's attack. Some have responded to Him with open hearts and outreaching minds, others have aimed at Him bitter jibes and accusations.

Samuel Butler, rebellious against the pervasive and appealing spirit of Christmas, shocked his guests when he descended to his breakfast table on Christmas morning with a premeditated remark: "Well, this is the birthday of the hook-nosed Nazarene." Christ had knocked at the door of his heart in vain. Samuel Butler was not willing to be reached, but he was inevitably judged by his opinion of Christ. Each one responds to the coming of Jesus according to his nature. Consider in contrast to Samuel Butler the answer of the converted prizefighter to the appeal of Christ, in John Masefield's *Everlasting Mercy:*

O wet red swathe of earth laid bare,
O truth, O strength, O gleaming share,
O patient eyes that watch the goal,
O ploughman of the sinner's soul.
O Jesus, drive the coulter deep

To plough my living man from sleep. . . .
O Christ who holds the open gate,
O Christ who drives the furrow straight,
O Christ, the plough, O Christ, the laughter,
Of holy white birds flying after,
Lo, all my heart's field red and torn,
And Thou wilt bring the young green corn,
The young green corn divinely springing,
The young green corn forever singing,
And when the earth is fresh and fair,
Thy blessed feet shall glitter there,
And we will walk the weeded field
And tell the golden harvest's yield,
The corn that makes the holy bread
By which the soul of man is fed.

In what guise does Jesus come to men, that He causes them to respond to Him each according to his spiritual nature? In the Gospels He speaks of the divine compassion in four figures of service and redemption, each of which can be applied to Himself.

The first is the figure of the *fisherman*. "As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." This is the only place in the New

Testament where Jesus uses the idea of the fisherman. It is not an exhaustive picture of Him and His work, but it has its place in any complete description.

With Jesus there came into human life a new sense of mission in religion, something infinitely patient, vigilant, relentless, never discouraged, forever alert. Charles, the craven king in *Saint Joan* said to the Maid when she returns from the dead: "You people with your heads in the sky spend all your time trying to turn the world upside down." He hit upon a truth here: neither Jesus nor His followers can leave the world as they found it until the Church Militant shall become the Church Triumphant, pure and undefiled before the throne of God. The great commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," was a natural corollary of this idea of mission in religion: you shall be fishers of men, combing the dark pools of life, braving the white water of humiliation, or the turbulent rapids of discontent and ill-will to seek and to save that which is of value.

A somewhat similar picture of the divine compassion is given in the parable of the lost coin, for which a woman searched until she found it

and called her neighbors to rejoice with her for the lost that was found,—a quality of heart that seeks in the crannies and cracks of life and discovers that which is overlooked, forgotten, unheeded. It was a quality of recovery that entered the world on that first Christmas Day. Henry Drummond once spoke of the recoverability of men at their worst; it was such a purpose that Jesus brought and still brings to those who will follow Him.

Mr. Gladstone and his wife, even in the busiest part of his career as Prime Minister, were wont to go out late at night to Soho and Piccadilly Squares to bring love and shelter to the flotsam and jetsam of humanity which congregated there. Sometimes Mrs. Gladstone would take her opera cloak and throw it over the shoulders of some bedraggled Magdalene, giving to her the unmistakable evidence that some one cared, cared enough to bear social reproach and the polite satire of social London. They had laid upon them a sense of divine commission.

When the gift of power and of light was communicated to John Wesley and his little group, he felt as if the hand of God was compelling him to go into the dark corners of English slums to

rescue thieves and drunkards and murderers. "We could hardly speak of anything else," he said, "either in public or private. It shone upon our minds with so strong a light that it was our constant theme. It was our daily subject, both in verse and prose; and we vehemently defended it against all mankind. But in doing this, we were assaulted and abused on every side. We were everywhere represented as mad dogs, and treated accordingly. We were stoned in the streets, and several times narrowly escaped with our lives. In sermons, newspapers, and pamphlets of all kinds, we were painted as unheard of monsters. But this moved us not." All such public servants are fishers of men. Thus is the first figure of our Lord one of the meanings of Christmas, the divine insistence and compassion that follows to any length or depth the object of its never-ceasing search.

The second figure of our Lord that comes from the New Testament is that of the *teacher*. "Lord, teach us to pray," His friends asked on one occasion. "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" Again they asked Him, "Who then can be saved?" and numerous other queries they put to Jesus—inquiries about the inner life of

prayer and meditation, questions about social obligation, problems of one's individual relationship with God. Always Jesus was being called upon to explain; always He was teaching, basing conduct on ethical principles, setting forth new ways of overcoming evil, new moods of outreaching love. He tried to explain to His followers that the Prince of Peace, Emmanuel, God with us, was the constant companion of man's way, rejoicing at marriages and feasts, touched with compassion by every bed of pain. Evelyn Underhill remarks in her *The Life of the Spirit in the Life of Today:* "If in their attempt to describe their experience of this companioning Reality, spiritual men of all types have exhausted all the resources and symbols of poetry, even earthly lovers are obliged to do that, in order to suggest a fraction of the values contained in earthly love. Such a divine presence is dramatized for Christianity in the historic incarnation."

Again and again, when He was asked, "Master, art Thou the Son of God?" He replied, "I am," and even in the last Passion Week He was put the acid question, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" and He replied, "Thou sayest!" Jesus was always seeking to illumine the moods of His

friends, to induce them to understand that He was living here to make clear the nature of His Father's love.

Gradually the entire world is looking to Him for the way out of our spiritual tangles. You see the Golden Rule which He set forth as the rule of life dramatized in the lonely figure of Christ on the Andes Mountains with the inscription carved on the base: "Sooner shall these mountains crumble into dust than Chile and Argentina break the peace which they have sworn to maintain at the feet of Christ the Redeemer."

The Near East Relief, which was started seven years ago by three men after business hours, had only one asset, the Golden Rule, and it raised up that perfect standard before men until by this time it has saved the lives of a million people, and thousands of children have found home and warmth and love and education in the great homes that have been built for them. The Golden Rule has worked on the minds and hearts of people until a hundred million dollars has flowed out in redemptive service for the stricken people of the Near East.

At the close of the late conflict it was not an easy task to make peace. Ancient wrongs were

to be vindicated, venerable hatreds were not easily dislodged, and into the Treaty were written certain clauses which rankled and burned the conscience and the pride of certain sections of Europe. Some boundaries were not right. Slowly in the *mêlée* of post-war hatred and disillusionment the teachings of Christ, sometimes not labeled but nevertheless the Golden Rule, began to torment the diplomats and statesmen of the Old World. Every remote corner where justice was violated by the Peace Treaty remained a sore spot in the world. Jesus' teachings have a searching, revealing, judging quality, and finally step by step governments began concessions and reconciliations, until the Locarno Convention ushered in a new day. All but the most jaundiced eyes see in it the crystallization of delayed hopes and hail it as a turning point in the affairs of men. With another such pact for the Balkans, the Near East, North Africa, and Asia, further armament would be mad, wanton folly.

Socrates sat on the Areopagus and asked piercing questions, revealing weak spots in his neighbors' superficial thought and foolish judgments; he revealed in its true colors the sour grapes philosophy of the Spartans, and the idleness of those

whose business it was merely to see or hear something about a God who was an object of philosophical speculation.

But Jesus was the supreme teacher. In parables of matchless beauty He portrayed the love of God, which was like a good man who saw a traveler wounded and robbed by the side of the road. True love bound up the wounds, put the man safely in an inn, and promised to pay what was owing on the return journey. Jesus set forth the judgment of men, according to the talents committed unto them. He interfused thought and conduct with one controlling motive, the motive of love and good will. All of life was to be consecrated, the sacraments of rest and of labor, of worship and of dedication.

He lifted out of the dim past the great ethical generalizations which were true and set them forth in a few discourses of timeless value, as a way of life. All great teachers and students hail Jesus as the supreme teacher of all time.

During the bitter days in the 1840's and 1850's, when Cavour was seeking to emancipate Italy from Austria and papal tyranny and to unite her scattered provinces in one powerful state, he had only a few staunch friends in England and Ger-

many. In 1856, when the cause of constitutional liberty seemed all but lost, he rallied the courage of his friends with the statement: "Whatever be our sufferings today, we have introduced Italy's just cause to the conscience of mankind." That is what Jesus has ever done. Imperial Russia justified the holding of serfs because the people were ignorant and docile; but their just cause espoused by Turgenev and other writers was placed upon the conscience of the Russian state and the serfs were liberated. In our own country, the writers of some of our best hymns preached the righteousness of holding slaves and fortified their arguments from the Scriptures, but the just cause of black men was gradually placed upon the conscience of mankind. Andrew Jackson saw the struggle coming in 1830 and said to a group of his associates concerning some of the states' rights debates with John C. Calhoun: "Gentlemen, today the issue is states' rights, the next time it will be slavery." Truth crushed to earth will rise again because it is congruous with the underlying moral order of human existence under a divine and an ethical Lord.

Wherever a great evil springs up, be it serfdom or slavery, or excessive working hours, or an un-

fair distribution of wealth, or traffic in drugs or liquor, or armed imperialism of the powerful in weak and backward countries—wherever abuse flourishes or wrong exists, the words of this resistless teacher places these just causes on the conscience of mankind. Think of Jesus as a *teacher*.

The third is the figure of the *healer*. "Behold, there came a leper and worshiped Him saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth His hand and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleaned." When the Roman centurion came to Him saying, "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented," Jesus said unto him, "I will come and heal him." Jesus was constantly healing leprosy, lameness, withered hands, deaf ears, blind eyes, driving out demons, restoring confidence, giving a basis for self-respect. Jesus incarnated within Himself God's wish for wholeness and health. It is no accident that hospitals grew up alongside cathedrals and churches and that the ministry of healing has always made a direct appeal to Christian people. It is only within our lifetime that

it is possible for a man to get a broken arm set properly outside of Christian nations.

Christmas means that beside the broken hearts and minds and bodies of men is One that has also suffered and is touched with the feeling of our infirmities—the figure of the healer.

At a small meeting to discuss the use of spiritual forces in healing, there was an exhibit of nearly one hundred periodicals, one with a circulation of one hundred and sixty-eight thousand, showing widespread interest not only in surgery and in medicine but also in tapping and employing unseen streams of energy to preserve and restore health. The idea of all around mental, physical, and spiritual wholesomeness is an abiding contribution which Jesus brought to life.

The faithful have ever turned for the healing of their souls diseases to Him whose seamless robe is by every bed of pain and who Himself has known the anguish of desolation in the garden and the depths of human woe upon the cross.

And the fourth is the figure of the *shepherd.* "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep." "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. And other sheep I have which are not of

this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." The world is in desperate need of Some One to lead the thoughts and the emotions of scattered and confused mankind, Some One to defend with His own life the eternal values wrapped up in redemptive love, Some One to shepherd homeless sheep, leaderless and unarmed before a host of possible attacks.

When John Thomas, a ship's surgeon on the run to Calcutta, felt the call to be a minister to the underprivileged groups in that great city, he recorded in his journal: "I think I could do anything for Christ. I would suffer shipwreck and death to glorify Him but a little. But if He should tear me from these Indians, there would be a bleeding, for my soul is set upon them." No one else in India cared for the people as he did. He was the first of any race to make his life business the carrying of the Gospel to the Bengalis. The conviction was hard upon him that he was to be a shepherd to backward peoples.

A hard-pressed college professor, seeking to bring the mind of Christ to bear on every phase of life, wrote to a friend: "I am sitting by my fire just ready to tumble into bed. As usual it

is a very late bedtime, but nothing else has seemed possible in these last weeks. College closes tomorrow afternoon for a six-day vacation. . . . I do want to rest for I am wòefully tired. In the past two weeks no less than seven of our boys have been in trouble, part of it funny, all of it serious. I've been pretty close to the center of things. . . . The last case isn't settled yet. It has consumed hours and hours of time, but it is worth it." Shepherds of men!

What meaning does the Incarnation have for you? Does Jesus come as fisherman, resistless, patient, undefeatable; does He come as teacher, illuminating, making clear the nature of God; does He come as healer, binding up a broken heart, curing deep sore spots in mind and soul; does He come as shepherd, shielding the timid, leading the ignorant, and protecting the helpless?

These are forms of the Divine love in Jesus, garments of love and compassion with which He clothes Himself as He goes through the world of men, seeking and saving that which is lost.

## *The Meaning of Christmas*

"And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.'"—Luke 2: 10.

Christmas is not only a day to be celebrated joyously; it also represents an eternal process. Christmas can come in August or in June; Christmas occurs any day in any place where there is an open door to a human heart. When the birthday of Jesus is celebrated, it is a commemoration of something which is from everlasting to everlasting, God's friendly revelation of Himself to men. Jesus was not only the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" He is also the Word which was in the beginning, the Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth.

Consider, then, *the meaning of Christmas.*

Jesus meant a fuller revelation of the nature of God. Those who believe in the omnipotence of God sometimes ask themselves whether God could not have worked out some other plan for

making Himself known to men. Is it not that God wanted to show men what He is like? At any rate, today when we think of God we think of Him as Christlike. William Lyon Phelps once said: "Without Chrsit I should believe that there was some Force, some Ultimate Reality, but I should not worship It, pray to It, nor give It my vote. To me Jesus Christ is the Divine Manifestation. He is the only man I ever heard of who looks like God, who talks like God, and who acts like God. If He is not divine, then my hopes are all dust, and my faith dead. He is my Lord and my God. I worship Him and follow Him as best I may."

Christ tasted the whole of human life. He was tempted in all points as we are. He wept at burials and He rejoiced at feasts. He was no stranger to work or to hours of quiet companionship. He showed men for all time how to live amid the shocks and hurry of life. The Son of God lived in the flesh as a man, and true to the name He gave Himself, the Good Shepherd, He led the way before the flock in all the paths of human interest and activity.

Jesus stated the basic principles of life in a crisp, pungent, arresting fashion and couched them

in a manner that even a child might understand. A distinguished Columbia professor in 1921 said he thought Jesus would have three words to say to the Washington Disarmament Conference: "Love your enemies." His sayings are simple in form, but they search the profoundest depths of man's being and invariably go to the kernel of the matter. He is the supreme literary artist of all time. No such stories or speeches can be found in Shakespeare or Homer. He was truth, He was beauty, and He was goodness, and when He spoke His words revealed His inner nature.

The coming of Jesus into human experience meant a more complete understanding, a fuller revelation, of the nature and heart of God.

Again, *only Christ can meet the needs of our day.* We live in a hungry and a bitter world, a world that wants bread, a world that wants peace, and a world that wants God.

In spite of the immense service of the Quakers, the International Red Cross, the Papal Mission, the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Y. M. C. A. and the Y. W. C. A., and the American Relief Administration, large and fair sections of Europe are hungry and will be so for a decade. One-third of England is living below the min-

imum subsistence level, below the poverty line. The student, official, and teaching classes of every one of the Central and Eastern and Balkan countries face a future with scanty food, scanty clothing, and few books. Everywhere thousands of irreplaceable spirits—musicians, scientists, doctors, nurses, teachers, and professors—have perished because there was not enough bread.

The vast devastated area caused by inflation and the inevitable consequences of war cannot be reconstituted in a few months or years; this path of desolation across Europe represents the severest blow to the human spirit caused by the holocaust which broke upon the world in 1914.

We need Christmas to bring in a new birth of Christ, because large sections of mankind are hungry for bread.

We need Christmas also because numbers are longing for peace. In lonely frontier barracks along the ten thousand miles of national boundary lines of Europe, in far-off colonial outposts, in great concentration camps surrounded by seas of men each one of whom is desperately isolated, guarding railway culverts and bridges in Macedonia, riding post in the Red Army from Afghanistan to Vladivostok across the Siberian steppe, in

French legions in Algeria, Morocco and Syria, in Greek regiments in Western Thrace, in Rumanian contingents in Bessarabia, and wherever men are gathered beneath national colors across the world, there are hearts longing and aching for peace and the fruitful pursuits of men. The military establishments of the world have changed martial tones for a wistful plea that unless Christ can be king of the world's thought, chaos will assume control.

The world is wistful for a rebirth of the spirit of Christ for it is in desperate need of peace.

Again, Christmas is imperative now for the world needs God. There were never more questions leading directly to God as there are now: Why do the righteous suffer? If a man die, shall he live again? Is there a philosophical basis for democracy? Is this sorry human race capable of enough self-discipline to govern itself? Shall we be able to master our machines, or shall we perish like Frankenstein, the victim of our own inventive powers? Only God has resources adequate for our personal, domestic, and political needs—God made incarnate in the One who stated the Golden Rule, who went about doing good, who made compassion His dominant mood, who said He was the Bread of Heaven for hungry souls, who

claimed then as now to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

The world needs Christmas desperately because it is in dire need of God; and Jesus came to be very God of very God to all who would know Him.

The Christian Church needs more of Christ's temper. In some districts of mid-Europe the people greet each other at this season with the salutation, "Christ is born." Here and there in international and interracial understandings, in the dealings of group with group and class with class, men are beginning to act as if Christ had been born. A few years ago the United States gave back to China twenty million dollars, its share of the indemnity demanded by the concert of powers whose subjects and legations had suffered from the Boxer uprising. The income of this fund has been used to found a preparatory school in China and to send hundreds of picked Chinese boys to be further educated in the colleges of this country. This gift has done as much as any one thing to bring about friendship between China and America. Churches and states can only be emancipated from rampant pride by Jesus' spirit of humility and love.

Large areas of the world stand in dire need of food, peace, and faith. Financial, industrial, and political dislocations plague every nation. But is there a problem anywhere which can be permanently solved without an appeal to the ethical standards which Christ brought into the world?

One visiting Bethlehem in the desperate days following the cessation of hostilities in the Great War would have found a squalid village with narrow streets on a barren hillside; at one end the Church of the Nativity, and at the other a Mohammedan mosque. From the minaret the muezzin droned the weird and musical call to prayer. Moslems in the streets drank their coffee and played dominoes; a few faced toward Mecca and began their prayer. "There is no God but God," came the cry from the minaret; "and Mohammed is his prophet." By going into the Church and descending to the lower room, one could, by looking through a glass in the open center of a large silver star, see the native stone. At least, in this vicinity Jesus was born. "The hopes and fears of all the years" were indeed met in the unfolding drama of that perfect life by which the thought and the work of the world should be

judged and in which it should find new resources for every new perplexity.

Is there a single phase of trouble anywhere, domestic, industrial, or political, which cannot be adjusted by a positive adherence to purity, honesty, unselfishness, and love on the part of all those involved? "The hopes and fears of all the years" are met in the birth of our Lord. It was more than a phrase when thoughtful people said at the close of the War: "It is now either Christ or chaos."

Every land needs a new birth of Christ. Many parts of Christendom have lost Him; they have laid their Lord away and they know not where they have laid Him. And every non-Christian land needs Him. A keen Chinese drew a parable illustrating the difference between Christ and the founders of other religions. He pictured a man on the side of a cliff, hanging by some shreds of a bush. Brahma came by and said: "Fear not, my brother, neither worry; in good time you will attain the state of Nirvana, wherein you will lose all sense of suffering and pain in the sleep of forgetfulness." And he passed on. Confucius came along and said: "If you had lived according to my ethics you would not be where you are." He

too continued his journey. Then Christ came along and reached down and caught hold of the man in jeopardy and lifted him out of danger and set him on his way again. Jesus always means salvation, He shall save His people from their sins and losses.

Christmas means love, the love of God for a world of men and women and little children, the identification of God with human flesh. It means hazard, the danger that both God and Jesus underwent in risking the divine dignity in the midst of a turbulent and unspiritual age. Christmas means the revelation of the fullness of the Godhead bodily in the face of Jesus Christ.

To a world crying out for bread, for peace, and for God, Christmas means help, resources which can overcome every obstacle that holds down the human spirit. When the angelic messenger proclaimed, "I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people," he was speaking a welcome word for the ears of this wistful and expectant generation.

Richard Crashaw expressed the desire of every uplifted heart as in the humiliations of day to day we cry out in our need for Him the angels announced to the startled shepherds:

Come, lovely Name; life of our hope!
Lo, we hold our hearts wide ope!
Unlock thy cabinet of day,
Dearest Sweet, and come away.
Lo, how the thirsty lands
Gasp for thy golden showers, with long-stretched hands!
Lo, how the laboring earth
That hopes to be
All heaven by thee,
Leaps at thy birth! . . .
Come, royal name; and pay the expense
Of all this precious patience;
O come away,
And kill the death of this delay.
O see so many worlds of barren years
Melted and measured out in seas of tears.
O see the weary lids of wakeful hope
(Love's eastern windows) all wide ope
With curtains drawn,
To catch the daybreak of thy dawn.

## *Divine Reinforcement*

"Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."—Hebrews 7:16.

At least one abiding fear grips every serious human heart, the fear of being wasted. For most normal people futility appears to be the supreme disaster.

The desire to be effective is deeply imbedded. The intensity of this longing for adequacy varies with different temperaments but it is present in most able people, be it for immediate or delayed power. Many a composer has lain down to his final rest unaccepted and unacclaimed, knowing that his influence would come in later days. His spirit would remain to haunt concert halls and hear applause long after his body had been laid to rest. Scholars without number have put their works in libraries to await appreciation by later generations, dying in obscurity, not having received the promise. Men are willing to wait for effectiveness, if they are assured that some day it will come.

A current idea that the majority of mankind is mad for the externals of life, garments and food and amusements, reveals little penetration into the secrets of men's hearts. Externals do appeal —they appeal very strongly to most men—but many are beckoned on by a stronger attraction, the desire to be effective, to register a permanent impression upon the spiritual and intellectual life of their village, city or generation.

Many an author has lived near the starvation line that his book might be published and his position assured in the world of scholarship and of letters. A great palæontologist was so poor that he boiled the bones he studied in the same kettle in which he cooked his food, but he could look into the future and see the power of his scientific insight recognized. All about us are earnest, eager man and women who are foregoing, denying, and struggling that they may have power.

Power and the desire for power varies with men. Some power is sinister and malevolent, choking out love and light and happiness. There are those who can wither by their sarcasm and their scorn. There are Simon Legrees of the soul, who utilize their mastery over human hearts to torture them. There is a deal of influence per-

verted, and sometimes we wonder whether or not the devil has a little the best of the game.

Mark Twain once remarked that he would like to meet the devil: "For," said he, "a person who has for untold centuries maintained his imposing position of spiritual head of four-fifths of the human race, and political head of the whole of it, must be granted the possession of executive abilities of the highest order." Allow for the Twain touch, and the essential truth of the saying cannot be disputed.

But there is another sort of power that strengthens and refreshes, an influence which puts another soul at ease, makes an anxious heart feel that it is loved, causes some poverty-stricken, threadbare personality to feel that it too is valuable to somebody, that it is precious in the eyes of a friend, an influence which reëstablishes and fortifies. Such winsomeness comes from no created reputation; it is something apart from good works or good words and is essentially the direct attraction of one's inner nature.

Extraordinary and sudden physical power is not uncommon. Men do impossible feats in sudden crises, which they could not accomplish through any amount of athletic training. It is

common in hospitals to see patients in delirium lift heavy objects and struggle with unwonted strength. In the War, impossible feats were accomplished and unbelievable burdens were borne. In these and other cases men seem to tap currents of strength which, if discovered and put to use, would rid them of feeble ineffectiveness. Only seldom do men in any pronounced way lay claim to the unutilized and undiscovered continents of power within themselves and those immense spiritual resources available in God.

*What is the secret of power?* Power is quite often a matter of belief. We are very susceptible to suggestion from all quarters. Captain Hadfield, of the Ashurst Neurological War Hospital at Oxford, tested a group of men, first, under normal waking conditions, second, after suggesting to them under hyposis that they were weak, and third, after suggesting to them that they were very strong. When normal, they had an average grip of one hundred and one pounds; when under suggestion that they were weak, the patients could grip only twenty-nine pounds; and when they were under suggestion that they were very strong they gripped one hundred and forty-two pounds. When their minds were depressed by

ideas of weakness, the strength of his patients was diminished by two-thirds; whereas under the stimulus of suggested strength their power was increased one-half! Such revelations are of the utmost importance in practical life. For most men and women the secret of increased effectiveness is the faith of other people in them in turn awakening a faith in themselves which when allied to faith in God focuses will and instinct and emotions in effective endeavor. Faith is creative.

The will has been glorified and too often mistakenly considered as the only source of power. For is there any one who has not had his will fail him? How often do our greatest efforts result in disaster. Paul was speaking exactly when he remarked: "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not: but what I hate, that do I . . . for to will is present with me: but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do." Will power and determination are essential to all moral endeavor, but the will needs reinforcement by the emotions at a thousand junctures when we determine upon a course of conduct and find we have no power

to perform. For the majority of mankind, to rely on the will alone is to trust in too meagre a resource.

The energies which give the driving force to our lives are found largely in the *emotions.* Without some inner censor the instincts would run wild, but given direction they form our single greatest source of power. It is when will and emotions unite that maximum power results. Wilberforce could never have induced England to free her slaves had he not appealed to emotions which caused men to sweep aside thoughts of economy. He quickened and nurtured the emotion of pity in the hearts of British people until by a great gesture of kindness the slave was freed. Could Jeanne d'Arc have liberated France and crowned the Dauphin Charles king at Rheims by merely thinking the thing out and saying: "Go to! I will raise an army, free my country, and become the heroine of young womanhood for untold generations"? She decided and then let the tides of emotion sweep through her until her presence electrified her countrymen and brought them courage and the power to carry forward their enterprise. Here the instinctive emotion was self-preservation, for herself and for her people.

Lord Haig realized that will alone was not enough to keep men doing the impossible, and when the British Fourth Army was shattered and the road to Calais and Boulogne-sur-Mer was all but forced open he issued his famous Back to the Wall Order of April 12, 1918, in which he told the Forces that their homes were at stake, that there could be no retreat, that they were at the last stand, that there was no other course but to fight it out. Energies were released that were unknown before; men accomplished works which seemed impossible. The same thing happened at Verdun, when Petain sent out the order, "*On ne passe pas.*" It kindled the imagination of the world and for six months unprecedented attacks were withstood by men lifted out of themselves because their wills were reinforced and their whole beings vitalized by the power and energy of their instinctive emotions.

Lieutenant Dawson tells a story about an Englishman from South America who was hurrying home to offer his services to the War Office. He was stricken with tuberculosis, but had nevertheless secured passage on a ship carrying an early contingent of American officers, hoping to give at least a few months of service to Britain before

he should "go West." Dawson says: "He typified for us the doggedness of British pluck. He had been through the entire song and dance of the Mexican Revolution, a dozen times he had been lined up against a wall to be shot. From Mexico he had escaped to New York, hoping to be accepted by the British authorities. Not unnaturally he had been rejected. The purpose of his voyage to the Old Country was to try his luck with the Navy. He held his certificate as a highly qualified marine engineer. No one could persuade him that he was not wanted. 'I could last six months,' he said, 'it would be something. Heaps of chaps don't last as long.' "

If this man had depended upon his will power alone, he would probably have died respectably in some sanitarium after a few months of lingering illness; but the call of his clan had sounded and there flowed into him reinforcements of power from the primary instinctive emotions centering about relief to those in distress, self-preservation, and the protection of one's home. Will and emotion coincided and he transcended difficulties which otherwise would have killed him. It is when our feelings are aroused, when passion is awakened in our breasts, when danger is immi-

nent, when sight of brutality to persons or animals kindles our righteous indignation, or when some emotion completely possesses us that we feel most deeply the sense of power.

But some will say, Are not our instincts merely animal? How can they be converted into that which is noble, and ethical, and good? An English nerve specialist remarked: "It is the intellectual and moral privilege of the human being that he can raise the energy contained in the instincts, the radical fault in most of which is their selfish and egocentric character, to higher potentials; that is to say, by transforming the quality of this energy he raises its power to accomplish his ends, as sexual passion has been transformed into love, and by changing the direction of the energy he endows it with a greater effectiveness of purpose. By doing so he retains the power or force of the instincts, but directs that force to greater purpose."

The Christian religion itself is based upon the emotion of love. An English author remarked: "Matthew Arnold's description of religion as being morality tinged with emotion is a delightful though unconscious satire on what religion actually is at the present day, but certainly not what

it should be. . . . No virtue is safe which is not enthusiastic. If religion means anything at all, it ought to mean the full and harmonious display and exercise of all our powers, emotional and intellectual, so that we present our whole selves a living sacrifice to God."

Instincts, if repressed and combatted, result in inner conflict, unhappiness, and often ill-health. It is an unhappy person who finds his will in direct conflict with his emotional nature.

The hopeful factor is that instincts can be directed and converted, and religion can be the most powerful force in this process of sublimation from lower to higher desires. The exploratory instinct, the instinct of curiosity, when undirected, leads people into prurient and morbid practices and in their desire to see life they often find death. Direct the use of this instinct and it becomes the urge that keeps the scientist at his test tubes discovering new vaccines or antitoxins to bless mankind. The combative instinct undirected leads to quarrelsomeness, pugnacity, and war, but directed it finds expression in wholesome games of rivalry—football, baseball, and cricket. The moral equivalent for war is to be found in fighting disease, ignorance, selfishness, drink, and all

forms of personal and social ills. Fear of the future makes industrious, fear of accident keeps us alert. Dread of fires creates an adequate fire department, fear of disease has developed modern hospitals and sanitation. The fear of God inspires us to use our talents, that we may be better able to give account at the Grand Assize. There is also a fear that paralyzes: "I knew thee, that thou wert an austere man . . . and hid thy talent in the ground," but this is essentially a perverted response to a normal situation.

The instinct of self-assertion, dedicated to high uses, refined and sublimated, is the secret of the personal success of many of the leaders of this and other generations. In Theodore Roosevelt self-assertiveness was a powerful emotion which he used for altruistic ends in the public service. He never played Mr. Micawber and wore a sham humility to cover more or less consecrated egotism. One of his greatest contributions has been the example which he has set for young men to assert what is good in themselves in the practical affairs of politics and government.

Religion, Jesus' religion, is not based upon repression due to distrust of human nature; it is in fact "the most encouraging, the most joyous, the

least repressive, and the least forbidding of all the religions of the world." It does not fear the world, it masters it; it does not seek to escape from life, it develops a truer and more abundant life; it does not dread dark and fierce desires, it evangelizes and sanctifies them. There are points on its path where it enters the shadows and even descends into hell, for it is a religion of redemption, the religion of the shepherd seeking the lost sheep, but "the end of it all is a resurrection, not a burial, a festival and not a funeral, an ascent into the heights and not a lingering in the depths."

What, then, is the secret of power? Surely it is using what we have of personality, will power, and instinct, focused upon a noble purpose, and informed by the same courageous dedication which carried Jesus through the garden and beyond the cross to the resurrection when God and inanimate nature both conspired to say that such a life should never perish.

*Where, then, does the incarnation in Jesus touch our lives most effectively?* How does He reinforce our will and evangelize our instinctive emotions? What dynamic does He afford which is peculiar to Himself? How does being a Christian help in gaining power in one's life?

Religion brings direction; a life of purposeful and unselfish activity rids us of harmful and morbid introspection. Religion, by centering the driving power of affection and of self-commitment in the surrender or dedication of the will to God, does away with a large part of the conflict within the soul. There will be intermittent warfare but the major campaign can be definitely and permanently won. At last we are integrated and liberated from the inner tension which saps our strength.

Again, when one is in the right relationship to God in Christ one's conscience is at rest and one's soul is free from turmoil. Jesus creates delicate consciences which are instruments of torture to the self-willed, but He also brings an inner security, a sense of standing on solid ground, an inner harmony which is "the peace which passeth all understanding." When one is seeking to get all he can for himself, one can have no inner harmony. Revenge and pride create discord, while chivalry and honor bring concord. Jesus directs thought from self alone until loyalty is given to what Josiah Royce calls the "beloved community," a fellowship in which one can live more richly and largely.

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Jesus not only directs life but He also brings a sense of adequacy which drives away thoughts of inadequacy. How many hold up weak arms and say: "To will is present with me; how to perform I know not." Any doctor can recite cases of people who have not walked for months, who have suddenly gained confidence in themselves or in some one else and have taken up their beds and walked. Confidence is based upon the instinct to prevail in a contest, filling weak men with power and often causing the mentally, bodily, and spiritually crippled to walk again. It is this confidence-bringing element in religion which is the good part of Christian Science, but which is available to every one. "If thou canst!" exclaimed Christ. "All things are possible to them that believe."

Jesus also brings liberation. He frees energies which can transform the living soul into a quickening spirit. Through love Christ harmonizes emotions into one motive, thereby abolishing conflict. The early Christians laid hold upon a newly discovered power. Christ told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they should receive power from on high, and expressions such as "I can do all things" give evidence of the sense which they had

of being endued with the divine spirit. Christ's Gospel frees us from the restlessness of mind which inhibits sleep and which is the cause of a host of nervous maladies. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength," "In quietness and confidence shall be my strength," "Be still and know that He is God," "The Lord of Hosts is with us," "The God of Jacob is our refuge," "There remaineth a rest for the people of God," "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," "I will lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou makest me to dwell in safety," are some of the ideas in the Christian Scriptures that liberate from restlessness. A European neurologist said: "Speaking as a student of psychotherapy, who has no concern with theology, I am convinced that the Christian religion is one of the most valuable and potent influences that we possess for producing that harmony and peace of mind and that confidence of soul which are needed to bring health and power to a large proportion of nervous patients."

The immense majority of men live far below their possible accomplishments. There are scarcely dreamed-of sources of power available through the right use of what God has given us, our will

power and our instincts. Instincts are not wild boars to be hunted down and repressed or killed, but splendid servants to carry out the choices of our wills.

Some are distracted because they are holding back from a complete commitment to the will of God; others are suffering from a repression of kindly and generous emotions; still others have killed pity and kindness by apathy or neglect. If a life is powerless, it may be well to remember that God is lavish with His gifts but He will not give strength to those who refuse to expend it. Ungenerous souls remain uninspiring and uninspired. Those who find harmony in expression, who find emotions of the jungle transformed and directed by the influence of Jesus, find their lives complete and unified in Him and live no longer "after the law of carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."

## *Enhancement*

"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength."—Isaiah 40: 29.

The reading world was deeply stirred in the winter of 1926 when two vessels, the *Antenoe* and the *Laristan*, found themselves unable to breast the heavy seas of the North Atlantic. Those who were at their radios heard the cryptic announcement to stand by, all attention over the coast receiving station being given to the mystesious S O S from out the mid-night sky. As if no other affairs mattered, the operators sought for the messages from battered crews on sinking vessels. The *President Roosevelt* changed course to succor the *Antenoe*, and the *Bremen* put on full steam ahead to save the crew of the *Laristan*. From out the stormy skies there came to despairing men a Helper, Who seemed to be listening for those wistful cries. In the case of the *Antenoe*, five lifeboats were launched, two were smashed, and two lives were lost, but the endangered crew

was saved. The *Laristan* was beyond aid and the *Bremen* could only stand by and watch the hapless ship founder.

This drama of the high seas, on which the world fixed its attention for four days, was a parable of forces at play every day in obscure crises and in unknown and unmentioned dangers. Help is always coming to somebody, sometimes to save at heavy cost, sometimes to be frustrated while the victim of turbulent habits remains bound, or, again to offer itself in vain to unsteady temperaments sinking in irremediable disaster. The fact of need and the fact of help are daily before us.

George Fox, the great Quaker rebel, made the discovery for his generation that man is never mere man, never just natural man, but man plus —man plus unknown resources, divine reinforcements allied to man's inner life and motives. There is something indissolubly connected with the soul which leaves us never isolated, never completely alone. A Helper seems always within hail.

Take three instances in which we need help, the enhancement of our own powers from unseen sources.

We need ampler capacities in the *realm of patience.*

Here is the man who thinks faster than his wife or children, who is irritated because they do not respond quickly to his plans and schemes. Here is a mother who in lonely hours at home has found faith easier, God more real, prayer more the living breath of life to her than to children thrown in the hurly-burly world of school or to her husband plunged in the roar of the great city's business. Here is a child eagerly reaching out for beauty, music, learning, arrested in mid-flight by the economic needs of the family, or by differences of opinion as to what is the best course of study to pursue, or the best position to take and hold. These and many others find it difficult to be friendly because, unknown to themselves, they are irritated by almost forgotten acts of injustice, by a malicious jest whose sting has bitten deep into the soul. Many also find difficulty in being friendly to those whose general attitude has caused them to feel inadequate, unworthy, or fearful of their own abilities. Not a few earnest spirits bear concealed wounds caused by harsh words, gentle sarcasm, polite cynicism, and malevolent sweetness.

When nerves are raw and life seems sterile of any abiding results, when friends seem far distant and the struggle upstream against financial worry, ill-health, increasing years, and past mistakes, who does not need a voice from the unseen to say, "To them that have no might he increaseth strength," or "My grace is sufficient for thee for my strength is made perfect in weakness," who does not need a savior to rescue us from impatience?

Jesus increases the patience of ordinary men and women by showing them the reason for patience. In that realm of qualitative values wherein spiritual considerations are paramount, patience and love are the only effective means of achieving that decorum and sweetness of disposition, that friendly, compassionate nature, whose perfect example was in Jesus. Robustness, willpower, determination and energy are well enough in their place, but there are problems which only yield to humility and appreciation, to understanding and sympathy. Here moods rather than abilities are the controlling factors. Those who wish to live by the spirit, to be satisfied with spiritual rewards, which are not often money or temporal power or worldly success, find

in Jesus One Who tried the way of patient love and in the end overcame the world. Humility never wins success in the external quantitive measures of achievement, it always prevails in the realm of the spirit. Jesus to the eyes of His day went down in irretrievable disaster, but in the judgment if history He remains not only the single unblemished contemporary figure, but the One who is a pledge that patience and humility and love are the most abiding and creative qualities of the human heart. Jesus increases the patience of ordinary men and women by showing them, through His own experience, the reason for patience.

Again, *He increaseth strength in faith.* Count Herman Keyserling in his *Travel Diary of a Philosopher*, comparing the faith of Christianity's early years with faith today, remarked that faith today is a tender plant that the smallest accident may kill. How to get our faith out of the seed-bed, into robustness of life, so that it can endure the frost and the heat and still keep its vigor, is a major question. In Eugene O'Neill's play, *John Ferguson*, the old man, as sorrow and injustice break upon him, seeks out his ancient Bible and reads the Psalms. The outrageous treatment

his daughter suffered at the hands of his landlord causes John Ferguson momentarily to throw over his faith, but the memory of past deliverances rolls in upon him and the authentic religious experience of bygone days, so undeniably true, claims him again and his voice rings out in invincible fortitude: "Weeping endureth for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." He could not deny that "To them that have no might He increaseth strength." Memories of other and better days compelled him to believe that Jesus could save the faith of men.

Once when John Muir was struggling through a snowstorm in Northern California, he beheld the august presence of a mighty peak soaring up through the valley blizzard into the majestic blue and wrote to his friends: "My blood turned to wine at the sight of Shasta." Jesus does something like that in the enhancement of faith.

Sometimes increase of faith comes through hardships so severe that only God can give adequate answer to human needs. Sir William Robertson Nicoll, for thirty years editor of the *British Weekly*, wrote of the hardships amid which Highland boys were reared and pursued their university courses. "Looking back," he said, "it is the win-

ter that strikes me as the dominant influence of the region. It was very long and very rigorous. The countryside was famous for its snowstorms, the huge drifts they left behind them often impeding traffic for days. It was impossible to work out of doors during the dark and roaring nights and the scarcely brighter days. People were thus thrown upon their own resources, and were either made or marred by their use of the winter. In those days people either yielded to their circumstances or heroically overcame them. . . . Religion, in most cases, had laid its strong hand upon them and the results were unmistakable. . . . Some who go to such places as ministers and teachers soon die an intellectual death. Others are stirred to exceptional activity by the apathy of those about them, and from the stern and solitary region a goodly number have gone forth to take a prominent part in public life." Jesus underwent more hardship than any of the overburdened sons of men, and poverty stricken Scottish boys found in Him a savior of their faith in life and its usefulness.

For some, increase of faith comes by severe circumstances for which only God is adequate. People are often, as those lonely crofters among

whom William Robertson Nicoll was raised, made or marred *by their use of the winter.* How often before a crisis one friend could say to another: "Stand fast; you will be either made or marred by the way you take this suffering!"

The faith of courageous men in any field, broken human fragments of that perfect courage which was in Jesus often come to bless those in need of inner reinforcement. On June 20, 1898, when Robert E. Peary was embarking on one of his disastrous early expeditions toward the Pole which paved the way for his final successful exploit, Richard le Gallienne's *A Godspeed to Peary* was read at a farewell banquet:

> Peary, Godspeed!
> I hardly know
> The vast and intricate significance
> Of all that snow
> To which you go;
> I only understand
> A brave man dares again.
> When heroes fight,
> Who asks his trivial why,
> So that they fight like heroes?
>
> Maybe—it well may be!—
> Peary shall find

Fauna and flora quite unknown to me,
And Polar secrets wrest
That shall unlock
Dependent secrets of the East and West.
But whatso science gain,
Or whatsoe'er accrues to commerce,
This I think is best:
The courage of the quest,
The fearless eyes,
The dauntless soul,
In them the Pole!

So that the Pole makes Peary
As all such dreams
Have power to make a man,
I care not much that Peary find the Pole!

And Peary did not find the Pole on that trip. In the vast icy desert north of Greenland he found baffling conditions of sea and ice and after unbelievable hardships stumbled into Fort Conger with his feet so frosted that he lost eight toes by gangrene and was forced to make his way south on the bleeding stumps. The memory of what Peary underwent has steeled the nerves of many an Arctic explorer.

The memory of what Jesus did recurs to brave and adventurous men and He increases faith in

their cause, in their associates, and, supremely, in Himself.

For others, increase of faith comes by discovering a kindred faith in those about them. Sometimes this corroboration of faith is found in books. How often, to a man in the midst of a severe struggle to save enough to buy a home or to send a child to school, or some other severe test, the example of some heroic endeavor—the blind Milton dictating to his daughter the long pages of *Paradise Lost*, Stanley cutting his way through the African forest inch by inch, with disease, wild animals and wilder men against him, or Captain Carpenter and his crews on the *Iris* and *Daffodil* storming Zeebrugge Mole—comes as the answering cry of encouragement in his day of extreme need. Very often He increaseth the strength of faith by the unmistakable evidence in others of a kindred faith. Those who have camped have often noticed how a fire with a single log dies out, when if two logs are placed side by side their warmth is augmented and the fire burns brightly; so a kindred faith transmits heat to another and both are strengthened.

*Jesus also increaseth the beauty of personality.* A recent austere candidate for the governorship

of an eastern state was dubbed by his opponents a "juiceless turnip"—his personality seemed to lack those elastic and resilient qualities which make for charm and winsomeness. Some ingredient of personality was lacking.

In the heyday of Lloyd George's influence, every statesman and newspaper remarked on the charm and appeal of his personality; in those days an ancient faith acquired as a boy on the dew-washed hills of Wales thrust itself through all his actions. He was no longer merely Lloyd George —he was Lloyd George plus unseen riches of self-restraint and dedication to high public service, a personality enriched and strengthened in that outflow of radiant energy which is God's gift to the quickborn, lives refined and made new by divine grace. Whatever of slackness or equivocation the old age of the War may have brought in prolonged days of severest strain, Lloyd George was a plain Welshman, heightened and ennobled by spiritual fire. There is an added touch of warmth and beauty, an indefinable charm which rests only upon a dedicated spirit.

Enrichments of life always come when one has struggled through a situation and feels that he can be worth something to God, for he has then

found the real basis for self respect. The Christian has the paradox of being humble and at the same time supremely self-confident that God can use him and use him mightily. The hazards and the difficulties have the same purpose in life as a bunker on a golf course, the very perplexities add zest to the accomplishment.

A great graduate of a Scottish university remarked of hard years of his schooling, years of poverty and self-discipline which were the creative factors in forming his life's ideals: "Then we were poor—poor, I imagine, to a degree quite unknown now. . . . I had an attic of my own, serving the purpose of sitting room and bedroom for four shillings, and it was expected that all my expenses of every kind should be covered by two shillings more, and this was done. My bursary of £11 a year paid the fees, and left a little over; and I received in addition boxes from home containing fowls, oat-cakes, eggs and other edibles. These presents were very acceptable and country students almost invariably imparted them generously to their friends when they arrived. . . . There were students even poorer than myself, and I am firmly convinced that one . . . died of sheer starvation. Poor fellow! He had

in a corner of his room a large barrel of meal, and he seemed to get all his sustenance out of that barrel. Parents remembering the Spartan discipline of their own early days were apt to be somewhat inconsiderate of the needs of a growing lad. Many of us had our constitutions permanently impaired by lack of good and adequate food. All too large a proportion of my fellow students died early." But those who did live went out to create a new social order. Privation forced them down to the great simple unmistakeable values. They found themselves made wise in appreciation and humble in spirit by the very forces that threatened to destroy them.

For those who will respond Jesus reinforces patience, He enhances faith, He enriches personality. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength."

## *Living in Christ's Presence*

"Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."—Luke 13:26-27.

This is one of the "hard sayings" of Jesus. He was generally so inclusive in His love, we are startled when good-natured Galilean villagers said to Him, "We did eat and drink in Thy presence and Thou didst teach in our streets," only to receive the reply, "Depart, I never knew you."

At the time of its great popularity in war days, when the Salvation Army was being fêted in Pittsburgh, Commander Evangeline Booth felt herself in strange company in the midst of those prominent in business and society. Her new companions had never felt the reproach of singing to careless passers-by on street corners in the rain. It seemed a bit queer that all those who formerly had avoided her now applauded. "I can't understand it," she said, "you never were with us before and I wonder whether you are with us now." The

Salvation Army had eaten and drunk in their presence and had taught in their streets, but they had left unappropriated the genius of her work —sacrificial redemption of men and women. They had never beaten a drum at Forty-second Street and Broadway for Christ or man. They had never written as their heraldic device "Blood and Fire" and meant it, they had never collected dimes for Christmas dinners before the City Library. Evangeline Booth knew that Jesus was speaking truthfully when He said, "Beware when all men speak well of you." War-time enthusiasts applauded her work, who had never given themselves in outreaching love. That she had taught in their streets did not mean that they were one with her in soul. Jesus knew that in the day of His glory and power many would claim allegiance with their lips whose hearts were unattached.

There must be some abiding friendship through the years to generate unbreakable loyalty in the time of supreme crisis. There must be some appreciation of a common purpose on which to build lasting affection.

For over two decades Wilberforce presented the cause of the abolition of the slave trade in the House of Commons, and for years William Pitt

opposed him. "I really love him for his public qualities and his private ones," wrote Wilberforce, "but how can I expect he should love me much, who have been so long rendering myself in various ways vexatious with him?" After numerous defeats Wilberforce finally won a favorable majority in the House of Lords. After bearing for year after year the abuse of the best people of England, he finally won. On the last night of the struggle, speaker after speaker arose to pay tribute to Wilberforce and to strike a blow at the dying slave trade. But they had not been with him in the days when he stood alone in the streets of Birmingham and of Liverpool to denounce a traffic in human lives. They were not beside him in the House when he was called traitor and fanatic and meddling fool. He heard the din of applause with bowed head, but went elsewhere for fellowship. The House approved after the fight was over, but it had voted itself out of any fellowship with Wilberforce by withholding its affection and restraining its generous impulses in the days of strain and trouble. It could never know Wilberforce on the deepest plane. Its members had eaten and drunk in his presence and he had taught in their streets, but they never

knew the nature of his ruling passion for a redeemed humanity.

These words of Jesus were addressed *to those near Him who never felt Him.* His charm and beauty never controlled their emotions, their hearts.

Irving Babbit, of Harvard, distinguishes three ways of life: the naturalistic way, the humanistic way and the religious way. Most people have grown past the purely naturalistic mode of life found in people of low civilizations. But there are many who frankly choose the humanistic way of life, a life of decorum and dignity on a lower plane, in preference to the religious way. There are two things which can be fairly said about this: The humanistic way of life is a valid way; it is much better to have a code, sheerly of good form, than to have no code at all. The second thing that can be said in the contrast between humanism and Christianity is that the Gospels also have their humanism; they have their adventure, their form, their beauty. If an iron line of discipline runs through the teachings of Jesus, if there is restraint and purpose, it is not for the throttling of romance and glory but in the interests of a higher romance. It is the sheer delight of a man

who works years in a laboratory, giving up the easy social ways, the comfortable warmth of the crowd, to emerge with insulin or some other discovery to bless his fellow men. Goodness and dedication and research are not unromantic!

Have you considered the terrific emotional power in devotion to Christ? for only when that is enlisted, as well as mind and will, does the Christian life become complete. No virtue is safe which is not strong with conviction and determination. Few adventures can compare with the excitement and interest and dedication required to straighten out tangled family problems or to rescue men and women from self-destruction of soul and body. When Jesus said to his sailor friends: "Come after me and I will make you fishers of men," He was inviting them to a task equally hazardous with hunting lions or tigers or any other wild beast.

If one desires a splash of splendor in the human stock, let him look at the bronzed face of a Teacher, seared by the hot blasts from the Arabian desert, who, with the help of a dozen fisher folk and farmers, began to change a world brutalized by Roman legions into the Kingdom of God. It was beautiful in its heroism, and we who hunger

and thirst for beauty in human life need the æsthetic and emotional reinforcement which His life and passion calls forth from receptive hearts. That is why we read so many biographies—we want to see how others grasped the nettle of life and won or lost. We are all lifted up by reading of others who won against odds. Has Christ—Christ incarnate in some humble life the world may have overlooked—eaten and drunk in your presence and lived on your block and been unappreciated in His beauty?

In Edna Ferber's *So Big*, Selina, the new school teacher, walked in the country lane amid miles of ordered Dutch vegetable gardens springing into greenness, furnishing food for Chicago's hungry mouths. She caught the significance of life, the romance of it, the eternal struggle of man to wrest a living from the reluctant soil, with humanity just two food crops away from starvation. She saw ruddy baby faces kept so by adequate nourishment, she saw the race adventuring in its quest for ampler life, she felt the beauty of growing things which men planted and tended until they became sustenance for people in crowded towns and cities. Selina turned to the country yokel beside her and exclaimed, "It's beautiful!" The

boy was dazed and went home to recount that the new school ma'am thought "Cabbages is beautiful!" The whole countryside lived in the presence of beauty but never possessed it.

Jesus walked through the villages of Palestine and walks through the world's life today, but only the sensitive feel their emotional life cleansed and renewed by Him Who lived most heroically of all the sons of men and went to His death at the hands of a brutalized and unspiritual group. They never felt His inner light, His love, His compassion. They had eaten and drunk in His presence and He had taught in their streets.

Not only were there many who did not appreciate the beauty of Jesus' life, but there were *those who heard Him preach but would not believe.* They lived in the presence of truth and heard it taught in their streets, but left it untaken for themselves. They had never known the delight of making life conform to the perfect standards of true love, or true beauty or true service. The recurrent motif in all great religions and especially in our religion—is that God wants men to join Him in His work to reconstruct the pandemonium of our lives into the image of the perfect. He waits for human minds to appreciate

Him and work out His plans. God had a plan for the liberation of slaves, but His plan was released when Wilberforce and Garrison and Lincoln gave their minds to emancipate the black man. He had a desire for the opening up of Africa, but Livingstone became His hands and feet in the great wilderness. He has a plan for us and for ours, but awaits the active coöperation of human minds. Men are to take Him with their minds.

It is the incarnation of truth in Jesus which is one of His most provocative elements. Here a group of statesmen frame an unchristian treaty with some backward country like China or Turkey or Egypt, and gradually through the years the incongruity between what is just and what is written in the document disturbs the moral conscience of the world. Here is a group of professional men, doctors or ministers, who compose a dogma about the action or the treatment of some disease, or the working of the love of God, which fails to correspond with truth, and little by little the truth escapes in spite of the entrenched professional prejudice and dignity. Here is a home where a man or woman has become confirmed in a selfish mood or a long standing grudge, but

over against the meanness and the spite stands true love to torture and to stimulate to right action.

In all these cases it is not so much that they could not know, but that they refused to believe that truth would be adequate. They had eaten and drunk in His presence and He had taught in their streets, but they would not believe Him.

Again, there were *those who felt Jesus' winsomeness and even appreciated His truth, but they did not act on His teaching.* They failed to appropriate what He had for them personally.

It is one thing to admire a candidate for office and believe in his platform; it makes a difference only when one acts and gets one's conscience into the ballot box. It is well enough to favor the cause of our country in time of war; it is quite another thing to enlist and be willing to die.

Dunois and the Dauphin and the Archbishop felt the moral ascendancy of Joan of Arc and knew her military capacity, but none of them raised a sword to liberate her body from the Inquisition. They ate and drank in her presence and she fought their battles for them in the streets of Orleans, but they never took to themselves the pith and marrow of her message to France—the

unconditional dedication to God and His right, above devotion to home, or land, or Holy Church. Such consecration required active obedience to God's will.

Jesus applied the acid test when he told a rich man to sell all that he had and follow Him, but the young man never knew Jesus because the secret citadel of his nature and his will was inactive and untouched.

No fellowship which is worth anything is attained easily or is free from burdens. No friendship is free from stern discipline. No great allegiance is exempt from sacrifice; allegiance to Christ, the supreme revelation of truth and love, cannot be free from its requirements and its code. To know Christ we must not only lay hold of His beauty and acknowledge His truth, but we must cast our vote for His way of life and death, to follow Him as Lord and Master.

Will we eat and drink in His presence and have Him teach in our streets and yet never know Him? Allegiance means not only appreciation by our emotions, acknowledgment of our minds, but supreme dedication of our wills.

## *All Cohere in Him*

**"He is prior to all, and all cohere in him."—Colossians 1:17.**

"I am not a man—but a mob," said a principal character in Well's novel, *The Secret Places of the Heart*. He was suffering from a lack of cohesion. He felt splendid abilities within him, talents of insight and strength and tenacity, but no inner organization, no unity, no cohesive principle. A well-known violinist records that in the muggy heat of August the thin cedar covers of his violin part, the powerful glue which holds them together becomes impotent. Until an expert renews the cohesive substance which holds together the few slices of thin wood, the instrument is wholly useless. All parts cohere when the uniting, binding medium has been renewed.

Down on the Gulf Coast, along the Texas border, are roads made of crushed shells whose surface is held together by an occasional sprinkling known as a water-binder. In other districts tar and oil are used for the same purpose.

There must be some binder to hold together the fragments and form a surface for heavy and persistent travel.

In machine shops along the river you will discover many grinding wheels being used to finish off metal parts of machine tools. These are made of minute fragments of emery or carborundum mixed with molasses and baked at high temperature, the molasses causing the mass of dust and particles to adhere in a rock-like mass and form a uniform and most useful grinding material. There has to be something to hold the useless dust together, so that it may bear enormous labors when thrust against steel and iron in the machine shop.

These are parables of the predicament in which we find ourselves. Some of us feel like the person in Wells' novel: we could say, "I am no longer a man—but a mob." We long for some cohesive principle, some supreme dedication, some primary loyalty, to pull together our divided personalities into one harmonious individual. We feel within us the experience of Jacob wrestling with the Angel, and we will not give over the struggle until God bless and give us His favor. We are conscious of the battle between darkness and light, between ill-temper and good temper,

between graciousness and surliness, between nervous fault-finding and calm faith, between rampant iniquity and aggressive goodness. Paul said: "All things cohere in Him." In loyal acceptance of His way of life lie unity and harmony and steadiness of purpose.

Others are like the violin which has lost its power to cohere. The glue which has held the parts in proper relation has become futile. Love or loyalty has been damaged by muggy periods of indifference, and our philosophy of life no longer holds together. We are unexpectedly let loose, unhinged, free, but ineffective and utterly futile. In one of Sinclair Lewis's earlier novels a girl philosophizes on this experience: "You know when you are absolutely free you are not free for anything else than to be free!" Complete freedom means complete isolation of all parts of life, out of contact with the power of fellowship and the effectiveness of unity; but when a supreme loyalty to Christ governs a human life, all parts are cemented together. "All things cohere in Him." Take a person who is unhampered by any bonds, and you find a person who recognizes no obligation of any sort, domestic, civic, or spiritual.

Again, some of us are like a road under heavy

traffic,—here a bump, there a damaged bit gouged out by continuous bearing of heavy burdens. Without a binder the best of road materials break up and there is no highway; without some cohering spiritual force there is no highway for the spirit of outreaching generosity and friendship. Something is needed to make the fragments of life hold together in an effective union. There is no highway without the constant cementing together of many parts otherwise out of contact and wholly useless.

Still others of us find our tasks not so much those of communication, like the traffic-bearing of water-bound highways, but jobs which demand hard, hot persistence through thick and thin. We are akin to the emery wheels which must finish and shape and resize the machinery of life by grinding against actual situations. And in the process we need the restraining and stiffening influence in our moral fibre which only a great devotion can give.

The man who felt like a mob, the violin which had come apart, the highway held together by the binding influence of water, the high-speed grinding tools of machine shops made of tiny particles, are expressions of our own need for a cohesive principle in life which will hold our scat-

tered interests into one great engrossing devotion and focus our diffuse efforts into one supreme dedication. All things in the moral struggle "cohere in Him."

We need *coherence in personal beliefs*, as we grapple with doubts, fears, frustrations, and hopes. Franklin K. Lane, Secretary of the Interior under President Wilson, himself reaching up wistful hands for an answer to life's riddles, wrote to a friend in sorrow:

"The mystery and the ordering of this world grows altogether inexplicable. . . . It requires more religion or philosophy than I have, to say a real word that might console one who has lost those who are dear to him. . . . I rebel at sickness as much as I do at death. The scheme of existence does not appeal to me, at the moment, as the most perfect which a highly imaginative Creator could have invented. My transcendental philosophy seems a pretty good working article when things are going smoothly, but it is not quite equal to hard practical strain, I fear."

Later, when the press of the War was upon the Cabinet, Secretary Lane wrote: "The mystical hanker after something higher is religion, yet it should not be all of religion; for man's own sake

there should be some cross to which one can cling, some Christ who can hear and give peace to the waves." This was his way of expressing the need for a focusing power in life.

A philosophy of life which will work and carry us along in fair weather is not enough. We need that which will carry us through poverty, unemployment, times of confusion and disappointment, and periods of long-delayed hope. The year has summer and winter, seed time and harvest, wind and rain. We need coherence in our faith embracing all of life's situations.

Jesus lived in the main stream of existence and was finally killed by brutal and unappreciative men. Yet He offers to us His philosophy of life, adequate for childhood's years, adequate for the aspiration of youth, capable of bearing the strain of mature life. The resources which He found in God furnished Him for wedding feasts, for healing, for roadside conversations with weary men and women, for hours of unimaginable loneliness in the Garden, for the supreme moments of agony on the cross, and for all the intermediate Calvaries when His friends forsook and betrayed Him.

How about His philosophy of life? Those

who have tried it have been able to say, all moods and all circumstances and all accidents of life are coherent in a loyalty to Him.

Youth with its dreams needs to tap the experience of maturity, and middle age to renew its fairest aspirations by its touch with young and ardent hearts. The prejudices of any period disrupt ordered thinking and consecutive work.

For many, life's interests are like a string of beads scattered over the floor, some precious bits rolling into crevices, others overlooked in the dust, some crushed beneath careless feet. Only a great loyalty to one transcendant personality can help us rearrange the scattered fragments on one string. Only a great devotion can hold together our shattered souls. Jesus' ethical background and His persistent love have made Him able to assert that above all others He can satisfy and unify our intellectual and spiritual natures and be the "light which lighteth every man."

We need coherence not only in our personal beliefs but also *in our homes.*

Sketchy and intermittent affection will result in the death of love as truly as neglect or only an occasional watering will cause a rose bush to perish in the hot and grilling days of August. The

emotional unsteadiness of homes, the warm affection of Monday turning into the icy indifference of Tuesday, gentleness alternating with mild cynicism, generosity giving way to niggardliness, cause the sensitive hearts of children to first wonder why parents grow indifferent, secondly to understand, and then to feel something fine and beautiful in life fade and die.

One of the indisputable facts of the new researches in psychology is that the mood of a home is just as pervasive and influential to the hitherto unknown sensitivity of children's souls as any outbreaking quarrel.

We are in desperate need of some one to make the emotional and intellectual life of our homes steadier and truer day after day, under all provocations. What are the adhesive qualities which hold life to life under the inevitable drudgery or poverty or misunderstanding or even under the prosperity of life? They are very simple and few, but vital and their powerful working—mutual respect, freedom from intellectual or spiritual tyranny, a reasonable share in work and in leisure, participation in decisions, a forgiving spirit, moral cleanness, a belief that humanity can rise under the creative nurture of love to unprec-

edented heights of nobility of character. If homes hold together, they do so because some or all of these qualities are operating. Jesus was the incarnation of respect, freedom, moral cleanness, forgiveness, love. Around Him any family can find its center, its teacher, its friend for every circumstance.

In Him personal belief, personal ambitions, personal dedications are harmonized and integrated. All who offer up their minds and wills to Him shall find that in Him all things cohere.

## *The Stamp of Jesus*

**"I bear branded on my body the owner's stamp of Jesus." —Gal. 6:17 (Moffatt).**

Doctor Faustus and Mephistopheles made a deal by which the party of the first part agreed to give to the party of the second part his soul if in this life he should be granted the desires of his heart. Nearly every one who goes to the devil tacitly or explicitly makes a similar contract.

Mephistopheles promised Faust great things. Said Faust: "And what shall be my counter-service therefor?"

Mephistopheles: "The time is long: thou need'st not now insist."

Faust: "No, no! The devil is an egoist, and is not apt, without a why or wherefore, 'For God's sake,' others to assist. Speak thy conditions plain and clear. With such a servant danger comes, I fear."

Mephistopheles: "Here, an unwearied slave, I'll wear thy tether, and to thine every nod obedi-

ent be. When there again we come together, then shalt thou do the same for me."

Thus was the bargain struck—the possession of a soul was given into the hands of evil by the choice of a free heart. From that moment Faust was possessed. He bore branded on his personality the owner's stamp of Mephistopheles.

Most of what we see belongs to some one. When private individuals do not hold the title we say it belongs to the sum of all private individuals, which we call the public. Before 1863 there were over 2,000,000 men and women and children in this country whose bodies actually belonged to other people. That particular form of buying and selling men has nearly passed away. But we all belong to something: we are all possessed by some devotion, some pleasure, some cause, some habitual attitude, some sinister vice, some great consecration. The love of beauty holds us, the lure of hidden truth captures us. The hopeful element in the situation is that we can choose to whom or to what we will belong.

When Jacob encountered the heavenly visitor by the ford Jabbok he wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the visitor saw that he prevailed not against Jacob, he touched

the hollow of Jacob's thigh and it was out of joint. The unknown visitor cried out: "Let me go for the day breaketh," and Jacob made answer, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." And he blessed Jacob, and Jacob left the scene of struggle a crippled but a consecrated man, bearing on his body the stamp of that spiritual combat which meant life or death. Men constantly are choosing between the high road which leads to life or the low road by which lies confusion, coming through their spiritual struggles with their marks and scars as a testimony of the fierceness of the battle.

Years ago a young British medical student was passing a tent in London where D. L. Moody was holding special meetings. He dropped in to listen and remained to pray. He gave his allegiance to Christ, his whole allegiance, and later he went to Labrador where his heroic work is a symbol of sacrificial service throughout the civilized world. Dr. Wilfred Grenfell came to be a possessed man: he bears branded on his body the owner's stamp of Jesus.

What is the owner's stamp of Jesus?

It is *the stamp of eagerness.* There is a certain rashness about a follower of Jesus, who has caught

the secret of making goodness interesting. He demands no audience to listen to his voice, he has no rights to insist upon, no reputation to be safeguarded, no settled prejudices to be justified, no grudges to nourish. His faith is anchored in the conviction that love is better than hate, truth better than lies, generosity better than niggardliness. It is a dare-devil business to live the Christian life, a conduct of the work and play of existence capable only by eager and willing and adventurous hearts. Jesus knew, as Stevenson knew, that life is a gift to be "dashingly used and cheerfully hazarded." "A frank and somewhat headlong carriage, not looking too anxiously before, not dallying in maudlin regret over the past, stamps the man who is well armored for this world." Eagerness for the unfolding plan of God is one of the stamps of the ownership of Jesus. Life opens out in chapters before the eager soul; the day's work becomes full of color and the right sort of excitement for the daring and courageous.

A rather picturesque phrase, "self-starter," has become current, which expresses much of what a Christian will be. Is one self-starting in his participation in the spiritual life of his home and church and state? Does he go the first mile in

cordiality and friendship and consideration? Does he make the initial steps in reconciliation, in mending broken friendships, and healing old wounds, in breaking down class and race feeling? Does he give his heart eagerly in dedication to God and to His plan, asking God to make him a messenger to do His bidding? Eagerness to know His will, eagerness to do it though it means waiting and suffering and delayed hope, is one of the marks of Christian discipleship.

When one enlists in the cause of Christ he is signing up with One who sees the whole theater of warfare against disease, ignorance, industrial oppression, spiritual slavery, and partial ideas of religion. Under Christ's leadership he may be sent to be a teacher in some drab and obscure quarter of a great manufacturing town, or as a minister in some uneventful small town, or to combat disease on the farthest marches of Asia or Africa. Recently three American missionary physicians stood alone against the inroads of bubonic plague sweeping down a valley in China. Facing death hourly, they mustered such medicines and preventive measures as were possible, organized the cleansing of the villages, and by the gift of life and labor saved the lives of thousands

by the segregation of this dread disease. When these medical men, back in college days, signed the Student Volunteer Pledge, they were enlisting in a dangerous enterprise and under a Commander who saw the entire field of action, one who places within the hearts of His friends and coworkers a sense of urgency and of eagerness.

There is also *the stamp of forgiveness.* Much unforgiveness is abroad not only toward men, but also toward God. In a New York hospital a mother called her minister in to pray with her child, who was very ill. The child rallied for a day and the mother, with a mechanical idea of prayer, hailed the temporary improvement as an almost magical deliverance. But on the following day the child died and the mother said she was through with God and with prayer for all time. She had not yet caught the idea that the life of faith is an adventure in a dangerous world, life in scorn of consequences, where immunity from accident and disease is not guaranteed, but where we nevertheless have the promise that although we come through with scars, our suffering shall not be wasted.

There are many who with Omar cry out against God under the shocks of life:

Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin
Beset the road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with predestined Evil round,
Enmesh, and then impute my fall to Sin!

Oh Thou, who man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake,
For all the Sin wherewith the face of Man
Is blackened—Man's forgiveness give—and take!

Such an outcry as this is based upon the conception of a less ample day, when salvation was conceived as dependent upon the caprice of the Almighty, a special dispensation to certain fortunate individuals elected by God in an arbitrary manner. God would not be God, the God of love and of justice, if He enmeshed us in a world where we must inevitably be stained and then left us helpless. Experience is all one stream, with the goodness of God pouring in upon the world continually through pain as well as pleasure. All his works show forth His name, though love is evident in some experiences more than in others. He, too, would grieve over our sorry human troubles, over our quarrels and our failures. His very nature is to get down with people in their troubles and pour out the riches of His love into a bitter situation. That is what Jesus did. That is what

Paul meant when he said: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." There will be understanding and forgiveness of the Almighty, if we see that in all our afflictions He is afflicted and that He is with us even in pain and defeat and disaster.

How about forgiveness of each other? Jesus said: "When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any: that your Father, also, which is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." This is no mechanical working of God's mandates; it is rather the statement of a spiritual fact corroborated by our experience. Divine forgiveness has its human counterpart. Who knows the cleansing power of forgiveness, save he who has from the depths of his soul forgiven? It seems to wash out our very mind and heart. Who knows the outreach of redemptive love, save he who has been forgiven? Forgiveness seems to clean our souls bright and new again, removing a terrible load and ridding us of a source of irritability. The face of a forgiving person has nobility impressed upon it, the stamp of the ownership of Christ.

There is another stamp on human character,

*the stamp of joy.* Laughter is one evdience of joy, but there are many others. As experience unfolds and evidence increases that God cares for His own, the man of faith has the conviction that in the last day God shall raise us up, with all our sorry failures, complete. And with this conviction there comes a deepening sense of joy. On the basis of sheer hedonism, of the fun in life, the way of faith could be justified. The Westminster Catechism with sure insight gives an answer to the question, "What is the chief end of man?"—"To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

The greatest enemy of joy is not the overwhelming catastrophes; sometimes their shock brings out in us undreamed-of heroic capacities. It is rather the daily load which we have not yet learned to carry. Goethe remarked:

Care at the bottom of the heart is lurking,
Her secret pangs in silence working,
She, restless, rocks herself, disturbing joy and rest:
In newer masks her face is drest,
By turns as house and land, as wife and child presented,
As water, fire, as poison, steel.
We dread the blows we never feel,
And what we never lose is yet by us lamented!

No one would deny the struggle involved in bearing the anxieties over house and land, wife and child, flood and fire, but it can be done. Some of the most burdened people are the merriest.

No one who has missed the joy of life can ever understand the reaches of the Christian life. Life is begun in pain and ended in the grim pageantry of death, but that is not all. Jesus went through sorrow but His life was not complete upon Golgotha but on Easter Day. His earthly career closed not on the gibbet but in the rallying of a group of joyful men who went out to found a new heaven and a new earth. The end of Christlike living is not a sorrowful funeral but a festival of joy.

Joy is one of the stamps of the ownership of Jesus. The Christian above all others can remain unperturbed when most things go, for his life consisteth not in the abundance of externals but in the richness of his inward grace. Like Cyrano de Bergerac, his soul "goes caparisoned in gems unseen," and he above all others gets the sheer fun of working with God in an unfinished world.

Still another mark is *dedication*. Dedicated people can easily be distinguished. The words dedication and surrender have become unpopular,

but, throwing aside the phrases and getting at the experience behind them, they mean that a person has a prior allegiance that runs as a clarifying principle through all his decisions. In the face of any situation he asks the question: "Does the decision I am contemplating ring true to my primary loyalty? Shall I go to college? Shall I take postgraduate study? Shall I change my job? Shall I marry? What shall be my life work? Where shall I give it?" In the face of these daily vital questions, the person with no prior allegiance is the creature of circumstance. The person who possesses a primary loyalty has perhaps an even harder time, but he has purpose and he sees light ahead, his life is integrated, he has direction, and he pushes on in scorn of consequences. He has the will to "grasp life's nettle."

Finally, there is *the stamp of sacrifice*. This is the deepest of all the divine imprints. On some it appears as bent backs and seamed faces; on others as deep, unrequited sorrow; on still others as hands hard with lye water and the scrub brush; it appears as love refused, or feelings trampled upon; it shows itself in broken health due to waiting on the sick at all hours of the night and day; it is revealed in shattered nerves of teachers, and

the sacrificed opportunities for mental and aesthetic development which is the lot of most mothers and housewives. Good doctors and nurses make no parade and are not puffed up, but yearly they lay down their health on the altar of community well-being and bear, branded on their bodies and souls, the ownership of the Great Physician who came to heal—not for praise, but for the sheer value of the thing itself. In some the marks of sacrifice appear as the bruised sensibilities of shy and timid souls crushed by cruel and unthinking associates. Wherever these sacrificial imprints show themselves they are not ugly scars, they are beautiful.

Recently an advertisement came through the post recounting the virtues of a certain preparation guaranteed to remove the lines of fatigue, laughter, care, and advancing age. Such a conception of life misses the fact that the adornment of great natures is not fair skin and unbroken bodies preserved for a lifetime, but hard knocks and seamed faces triumphantly borne. The marks of sacrifice upon the soul will be one of the imprints of the ownership of Jesus. When all else fails, willing sacrificial love finally wins the hearts of men and is the mark of a friendly spirit.

At the Grand Central Station in New York at Christmas time, when boys come trooping home from the great schools, one is able to tell fairly accurately from which they come—Exeter, Andover, St. Paul's, St. Mark's, The Hill, Taft, Choate and others give their boys a distinctive stamp. Just so our habits, our work, our associations, our enthusiasms, and our loyalties cling about us. The Arab guides in Egypt say they can tell whether an American tourist is from New York or Chicago or further West. The railroad ticket sellers of Europe can almost invariably tell whether one wants a first, second, or third class ticket. The purposes we appropriate, the way we live and think, the things we love, the books we read,—all leave their stamp on us. We grow to be possessed, we belong to something or some one.

Allegiance to Christ also leaves its deep impression upon us. The marks of His ownership are eagerness, forgiveness, joy, dedication, and sacrifice, lived doggedly and borne gracefully.

When Lord Shaftesbury was giving his life to emancipate men and women and little children from fourteen hours per day labor in the darkness and dust of English mines, Sir Robert Peel was the one man who could have helped him most at a

certain juncture. But Shaftesbury was forced to record of him: "He has abundance of human honesty but not much of divine faith: he will never do a dishonorable thing, he will be ashamed of doing a religious one: he will tolerate no jobs to win votes, he will submit to no obloquy to please God!" The divine imprint was not very deeply impressed on Sir Robert Peel. He was not possessed.

The reporter of the *London Times* looking down from the gallery of the League of Nations at Geneva at the eagle-like countenance of Lord Robert Cecil, wrote in his journal: "He seems a dedicated man." The imprint of great affairs, great commitments, great ideals, was upon him, and he was possessed by them. What mark is upon you—is it the imprint of small things, or is it an allegiance to Christ grounded in sacrificial love and dedicated to light and truth?

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